



**Integrated Community Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Improvement  
(ICOWASH) Project in Northern Ghana**

---

**Module 4:  
Behaviour Change and Communication**



# Introduction

- ❑ Welcome to Module 4, where we will explore behavior change and communication in the context of WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene).
- ❑ In this module, we will define behavior change, discuss its relevance to promoting WASH practices, and engage in activities that foster effective communication and behavior change strategies.

## Module 4: Behavior Change and Communication

- ❑ Begin the session with an engaging activity or video that introduces behavior change theories and their relevance to promoting WASH practices.
- ❑ Conduct a group discussion on common barriers to behaviour change, such as cultural norms, lack of resources, or misconceptions. Encourage participants to share their experiences and brainstorm solutions.
- ❑ Divide participants into pairs or small groups and assign each group a behaviour change technique (e.g., modeling, peer influence, incentives). Ask them to create short skits or presentations demonstrating the application of their assigned technique in promoting WASH practices.

## Module 4: Behavior Change and Communication – Cont.

- ❑ Organize a role-playing activity where participants act out scenarios related to promoting behaviour change. Provide feedback and facilitate a discussion on effective communication strategies and approaches.
- ❑ Use case studies or success stories to illustrate the impact of behavior change interventions in other schools or communities. Encourage participants to identify transferable lessons and potential adaptations for their own school.
- ❑ Conclude the module by facilitating a reflection activity where participants share their insights, challenges, and commitments to promoting behavior change within the school community.

# What is Behaviour Change?

- ❑ **Definition:** Behaviour change refers to the process of adopting new behaviours, modifying existing behaviours, or discontinuing harmful behaviors.
- ❑ Behaviour change in the context of WASH focuses on promoting and sustaining positive hygiene practices, sanitation behaviours, and water-related habits.
- ❑ Here's an elaboration on each aspect:

# Positive Hygiene Practices

- ❑ **Handwashing with soap:** Encouraging individuals to adopt regular handwashing with soap at critical times, such as before eating, after using the toilet, or after handling waste. Emphasize the importance of proper handwashing techniques, including scrubbing all surfaces of the hands for at least 20 seconds.
- ❑ **Personal hygiene:** Promoting behaviors such as regular bathing or showering, teeth brushing, and nail care. Highlight the benefits of these practices in maintaining cleanliness, preventing body odor, and promoting overall well-being.
- ❑ **Menstrual hygiene management:** Providing education and resources to promote proper menstrual hygiene practices, including the use of sanitary products, proper disposal methods, and addressing stigmas associated with menstruation.

## Sanitation Behaviours:

- ❑ **Toilet usage:** Encouraging individuals to use improved sanitation facilities, such as toilets or latrines, instead of open defecation. Promote the benefits of using proper sanitation facilities, such as maintaining cleanliness, preventing contamination of water sources, and reducing the spread of diseases.
- ❑ **Safe disposal of waste:** Emphasizing the importance of proper waste management, including the segregation of waste, using designated bins, and promoting recycling and composting practices. Encourage individuals to dispose of waste responsibly to prevent environmental pollution and protect public health.

# Water-Related Habits

- ❑ **Safe water storage:** Promoting the use of clean and covered containers for storing drinking water to prevent contamination and maintain its quality.
- ❑ **Water conservation:** Encouraging individuals to adopt water-saving habits, such as turning off taps when not in use, fixing leaks, and utilizing water-efficient appliances. Highlight the environmental benefits of water conservation and the importance of using water wisely.
- ❑ **Safe water handling:** Educating individuals on the importance of using safe water sources and proper water treatment methods when necessary. Promote the use of household water treatment technologies, such as filtration, chlorination, or boiling, to ensure the safety of drinking water.

# Importance of Behaviour Change in WASH

❑ Behaviour change is crucial for achieving sustainable WASH outcomes and creating long-lasting impacts on individuals and communities. The importance of behaviour change in WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene) cannot be overstated. Here are key reasons why behavior change is crucial in the context of WASH:

## ❑ **Disease Prevention:**

- ✓ Behaviour change plays a vital role in preventing waterborne and hygiene-related diseases.
- ✓ Adopting positive behaviors such as handwashing with soap, using improved sanitation facilities, and practicing safe water storage and handling can significantly reduce the risk of diseases like diarrhea, cholera, typhoid, and hepatitis A.

# Importance of Behaviour Change in WASH – Cont.

## ☐ Sustainability:

- ✓ Behaviour change interventions focus on creating long-lasting change by encouraging individuals and communities to sustain positive WASH practices.
- ✓ Sustainable behaviour change helps ensure that the benefits and impact of WASH interventions endure over time, contributing to improved health outcomes and better overall well-being.

## ☐ Environmental Protection:

- ✓ Behaviour change in WASH promotes responsible waste management, proper water usage, and conservation practices.
- ✓ By encouraging behaviours like safe disposal of waste, water conservation, and avoiding pollution of water sources, behaviour change interventions contribute to protecting the environment and preserving natural resources.

# Importance of Behaviour Change in WASH – Cont.

## ❑ Empowerment:

- ✓ Behaviour change empowers individuals and communities to take ownership of their health and well-being.
- ✓ By adopting positive WASH behaviors, individuals gain a sense of control over their living conditions and are better equipped to protect themselves and their communities from the risks associated with inadequate water, sanitation, and hygiene practices.

## ❑ Holistic Approach:

- ✓ WASH interventions that incorporate behavior change strategies take a holistic approach by addressing not only physical infrastructure but also the human aspect of WASH.
- ✓ While access to clean water and improved sanitation facilities is essential, behavior change interventions recognize that sustained positive behaviors are crucial for maximizing the benefits of WASH investments.

# Importance of Behaviour Change in WASH – Cont.

## ❑ Impact on Education and Productivity:

- ✓ Improved WASH behaviors, such as regular handwashing and access to safe sanitation facilities, have a direct impact on educational outcomes and productivity.
- ✓ By reducing the incidence of waterborne diseases and improving overall hygiene practices, behavior change interventions create healthier learning environments, reduce absenteeism, and enhance academic performance and productivity.

## ❑ Cultural and Social Norms:

- ✓ Behavior change interventions take into account cultural and social norms, recognizing that individual behaviors are influenced by societal and community factors.
- ✓ By working with communities, behavior change programs can navigate cultural beliefs and practices, fostering acceptance and adoption of positive WASH behaviors that align with local customs and traditions.

# Common Barriers To WASH Behaviour Change

- ❑ **Lack of Knowledge and Awareness:** Limited knowledge or awareness about the benefits of specific behaviors or the risks associated with inadequate WASH practices can act as a barrier. Without understanding the importance of behavior change, individuals may be resistant to adopting new habits or may not see the relevance of certain practices.
- ❑ **Cultural and Social Norms:** Cultural beliefs and social norms can influence behavior patterns and may present challenges to behavior change. Traditional practices, taboos, or social expectations may discourage individuals from adopting new behaviors that conflict with established customs or beliefs.
- ❑ **Lack of Resources:** Limited access to necessary resources, such as clean water, sanitation facilities, hygiene products, or infrastructure, can impede behavior change efforts. Without adequate resources, individuals may struggle to maintain desired behaviors or face barriers to practicing proper hygiene or sanitation.

## Common Barriers To WASH Behaviour Change – Cont.

- ❑ **Infrastructure Challenges:** Inadequate or poorly maintained infrastructure, such as a lack of improved sanitation facilities or reliable water supply, can hinder behavior change. If individuals do not have access to appropriate facilities or face constant challenges related to infrastructure, it can be difficult to adopt and sustain positive behaviors.
- ❑ **Socioeconomic Factors:** Economic constraints, poverty, and limited financial resources can pose barriers to behavior change. Individuals may prioritize immediate needs over investing in WASH practices or lack the means to purchase hygiene products or maintain sanitation facilities.
- ❑ **Resistance to Change:** Humans are creatures of habit, and change can be met with resistance or skepticism. Breaking existing habits and adopting new behaviors may require overcoming personal resistance to change, especially if individuals have been practicing certain habits for a long time.

## Common Barriers To WASH Behaviour Change – Cont.

- ❑ **Misconceptions and Misperceptions:** Misinformation, misconceptions, or incorrect beliefs about WASH practices can hinder behavior change efforts. Addressing misconceptions and providing accurate information is essential for dispelling myths and promoting behavior change.
- ❑ **Lack of Motivation or Incentives:** Without adequate motivation or incentives, individuals may struggle to adopt and sustain new behaviors. The perceived benefits of behavior change may not outweigh the effort or perceived costs associated with adopting and maintaining new practices.
- ❑ **Lack of Social Support:** The absence of social support systems, such as peer encouragement, community engagement, or role models, can make it challenging to sustain behavior change. Supportive social networks and community involvement are crucial for reinforcing positive behaviors and creating an environment that supports behavior change.

## Common Barriers To WASH Behaviour Change – Cont.

- ❑ **Limited Access to Education and Awareness Programs:** The absence of educational programs, awareness campaigns, or behavior change interventions can hinder the dissemination of information and the promotion of desired behaviors. Lack of access to educational resources can limit individuals' ability to understand and adopt new practices.
- ❑ It is essential to identify and address these barriers through tailored strategies that address the specific challenges faced by the target population.
- ❑ By understanding and working to overcome these barriers, behavior change interventions can be more effective in promoting sustainable WASH practices.

# Behaviour Change Strategies

- ❑ **Education and awareness:** Providing information on the benefits and risks associated with specific behaviors, using engaging and culturally appropriate methods.
- ❑ **Social norms and peer influence:** Leveraging the power of social norms and peer influence to encourage individuals to adopt desired behaviours. Highlight positive role models and emphasize the benefits of collective action.
- ❑ **Communication and messaging:** Utilizing clear, consistent, and persuasive communication messages to promote behavior change. Tailor the messages to address specific barriers, misconceptions, or cultural beliefs that may hinder behavior adoption.
- ❑ **Incentives and rewards:** Offering incentives or rewards as motivators for individuals or communities to engage in desired behaviours. This could include recognition, certificates, or small tangible rewards.
- ❑ **Community engagement:** Involving the community in decision-making processes, fostering a sense of ownership, and encouraging collective responsibility for promoting and

# Behaviour Change Techniques

- ❑ Behavior change techniques are specific strategies or approaches used to promote and facilitate behavior change. Here are three commonly used behavior change techniques in the context of WASH:
- ❑ **Modeling:** Modeling involves demonstrating the desired behavior to individuals or communities as a way to encourage them to adopt the behavior themselves.
- ✓ **Implementation:** This technique can be applied by showcasing individuals or role models practicing positive WASH behaviors, such as proper handwashing techniques or using improved sanitation facilities. By observing others engaging in the desired behavior, individuals are more likely to perceive it as socially acceptable and adopt it themselves.
- ❑ **Peer Influence:** Peer influence leverages social networks and relationships to encourage behavior change. It recognizes the power of social norms and the impact of peers on shaping individual behavior.

## Behaviour Change Techniques – Cont.

- ✓ **Implementation:** Encouraging individuals to influence and support each other in adopting positive WASH behaviors is key. Peer influence can be facilitated through group discussions, community engagement, or peer-to-peer campaigns. By emphasizing positive role models within the community and fostering a sense of collective responsibility, individuals are more likely to adopt and sustain the desired behaviors.
- ☐ **Incentives:** Incentives involve providing rewards or benefits to individuals or communities as a motivator for behavior change.
- ✓ **Implementation:** Incentives can be used to encourage and reinforce positive WASH behaviors. Examples include providing small rewards, recognition, or certificates for individuals who consistently practice desired behaviors like regular handwashing or proper waste disposal. Incentives can also be community-wide, such as organizing competitions or events with prizes to encourage widespread participation.

# Conclusion

- ❑ Overall, behavior change interventions in schools and communities have shown transformative impacts, leading to improved health outcomes, environmental sustainability, and empowerment.
- ❑ By promoting sustained behavior change, these interventions create a foundation for healthier, more resilient communities and contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals related to WASH.

# Thank you!

