

Identify Vital Behaviors

Preceptors are influencers who can motivate and enable their preceptees and co-workers to change through the use of the Influencer-Six Source Model.

To change any entrenched personal or organizational behavior, first identify vital behaviors and then tap into sources of influence. The premise of the Influencer model is that the solution to most problems is driven by a small handful of vital behaviors. If these behaviors are implemented, rapid sustained improvements will result.

An example of this model's use is Spectrum Health in Michigan. They increased hand hygiene compliance from the national average of 60 percent to more than 90 in just two months. The key to success was understanding that every nurse must be invested in adopting three vital behaviors. Leaders recruited their nurses to champion these behaviors.

1. WIWO (Wash In Wash Out). Each nurse who enters and exits a patient room is expected to use soap and water or hand sanitizer.

2. Accountability. Hold one another accountable. Each nurse is 100 percent accountable for personal hand hygiene behavior, all nurses are 100 percent accountable for their co-workers' behavior. This provided the social influence to guarantee compliance — especially in hectic moments when nurses face competing urgent priorities.

3. Thank You. Whenever a colleague reminds you to wash your hands (even if you just washed), you say "thank you." This reduced nurses' fear of speaking up because others would thank them for a verbal reminder rather than hold a grudge.

To adopt the vital behaviors, each individual nursing unit reviewed a list of interventions and selected ideas that would both motivate their staff and fit with the unit's culture.

Nurses Use Six Sources of Influence to Lead Behavior Change

The Influencer model organizes influence strategies into six sources that motivate and enable people to change through personal, social and structural forces. The following show how Spectrum Health used the Influencer model.

Source 1 — Personal Motivation. The goal of this source is to ignite nurses' passion for hand hygiene and see the vital behaviors as the right thing to do.

- **Link to a personal experience.** Encourage nurses to share the experiences of family members and patients related to hospital-acquired infections.
- **Become your patient's advocate.** Your peers joined health care in large part because of their desire to help patients. Tap into that motivation and challenge them to take on the role of patient advocate.
- **Connect with purpose.** Ask those who work in your unit to sign a commitment board that asks them to uphold the three vital behaviors.

Source 2 — Personal Ability. Make WIWO routine behavior, and make it comfortable to hold one another accountable.

- **Create scripts** that are brief, nonjudgmental and friendly for reminding others, responding to a reminder and reacting to resistance.
- **Conduct role plays** until nurses are comfortable speaking up to colleagues and physicians. Include a physician in a practice session.

Source 3 — Social Motivation. Build positive peer pressure and create a shared value around the vital behaviors.

- **Recruit physician supporters** to champion the hand hygiene initiative and to recruit their colleagues.
- **Work through opinion leaders.** Invite nurses who are respected by their peers to lead the way in perfecting hand hygiene and in reminding others.
- **Showcase public commitments** with colorful and signed commitment posters in public places throughout the hospital.
- **Make it fun.** Lower the pressure of confronting others. One physician called herself the Queen of Clean and wore a tiara. Her favorite line was "Don't make me take out my crown."

Source 4 — Social Ability. Provide support to wash up and remind others.

- **Have everyone remind everyone, regardless of role or position.** Create a small pocket-sized reminder card listing the vital behaviors and use it as a nonverbal, nonintimidating reminder for staff to WIWO.
- **Use opinion leaders to convert skeptics.** Identify staff members and supportive physicians with the credibility and skills needed to speak up.
- **Engage partners outside your unit.** Encourage hand hygiene to be performed by anyone who enters your facility by posting signs.

Source 5 — Structural Motivation. Create incentives and rewards for acting on the vital behaviors to enhance personal and social motivation.

- **Use individual rewards** with small prizes for washing and for reminding others. Spectrum Health used stickers and gift certificates.
- **Celebrate success together.** Simple thank you notes can be powerful.

Source 6 — Structural Ability. Change the physical environment to make hand hygiene more convenient, easier to remember and easier to track.

- **Conduct assessments** to identify needs for location of sanitizer dispensers.
- **Use reminder cards** that staff can politely slip to offenders.
- **Use visual cues,** such as hand sanitizer stations, signs and screen savers.

As a preceptor, identify the vital behaviors that you want for your preceptee and determine how you can use the six sources of influence. Track your preceptee's progress and be prepared to tell a story of success.

- by David Maxfield, co-author of *Influencer and Change Anything: The New Science of Personal Success*. www.changeanythingbook.com