

MOTIVATING HOME ENERGY ACTION

Fact sheet 6 - Changing household attitudes

Changing household attitudes will not automatically lead to lower home energy use.

Several studies have noted there is a weak relationship between householders' attitudes to home energy use and the energy actions they undertake.

In fact people who believe conservation is the most important strategy for improving the future energy situation are no more likely than others to save energy.

ESSENTIAL FEATURES OF ATTITUDE STRATEGIES

The link between householder attitudes and action is stronger when:

- attitudes and actions are measured correctly
- attitudes are specifically related to a energy action
- householders are less concerned about peer approval
- attitudes of all household members are taken into account
- attitudes are formed through direct experience
- attitudes are related to actual energy use rather than self-reported use
- the energy action is a low-cost measure, and
- the energy action requires little time and money.

Take into account other factors supporting or hindering energy actions including:

- government policies and regulations
- social pressures
- intangible aspects, for example the perceived pleasantness or ease of the task, and
- spouse attitudes.

IS MY PLANNED STRATEGY RELEVANT?

Low-cost energy actions are influenced by attitudes. Energy actions that are expensive, or take a lot of effort, are less influenced by attitudes.

All successful attitude change strategies:

- frequently remind householders they already hold positive attitudes, and
- remind householders that their attitudes are relevant to their actions.

TYPES OF ATTITUDE CHANGE STRATEGIES

Use strong personal reminders

Most householders think we should all save energy in our homes, but they don't take home energy actions. When made aware that their actions are inconsistent with their attitudes, they often change either their attitudes or their actions. Strong personal reminders tell householders there is a discrepancy between their attitudes and actions and motivate them to change their actions.

How to implement a strategy:

- choose a group of households
- ask whether they think individuals have a responsibility to save energy
- measure their home energy use
- establish which households think that individuals have a responsibility, but still use more energy than average or energy efficient households of similar size
- inform households with positive views but high home energy use of the discrepancy between their views and energy use
- encourage them to make a commitment to reduce their home energy use, and
- give them ideas on how to save energy in their homes and allow them to choose specific actions.

Use action prompts

This strategy assumes householders have positive environmental attitudes, but need help to identify:

- what to do
- when to do it, and
- how to do it.

Action prompts can be unreliable as the prompt loses its novelty for the householder.

Use foot-in-the-door strategies

Once a householder has taken a small energy action, they are likely to take further actions if provided with encouragement and attitude reinforcement. Encourage householders to see themselves as concerned about saving energy and you can stimulate them to further action.



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Fact sheet 6 - Changing household attitudes (continued)

Use media campaigns

Media campaigns reinforce the strong attitudes Australians already have towards saving energy:

- target attitudes relating to the desired action
- offer something for free
- suggest very specific energy saving actions, and
- decide on a target group and develop a campaign that appeals to its concerns.

Successful media campaigns:

- expose the message repeatedly
- point out that positive attitudes call for positive actions, and
- implement supporting policies.

COOL communities are wise communities

For further information you can visit the Cool Communities website at: www.greenhouse.gov.au/coolcommunities/index.html
The full *Motivating Home Energy Action* handbook is online at: www.greenhouse.gov.au/coolcommunities/motivating/index.html

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