



# Inspiring change within a culture of food abundance?

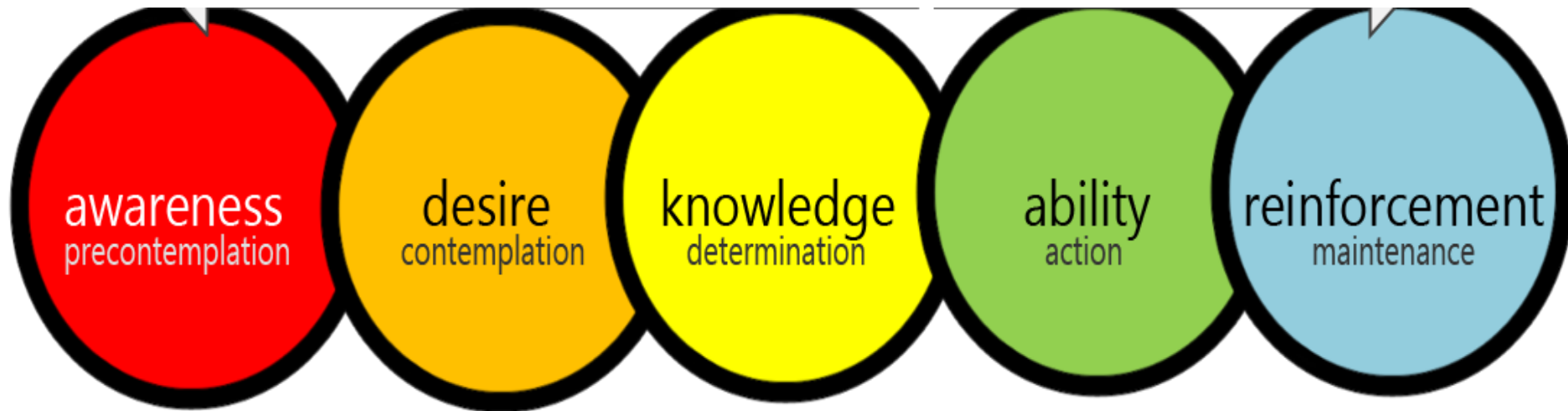
Wednesday, 31 May 2017

ANA Conference  
Te Papa, Wellington



# Behaviour Change Model

Where is Pacific on this model?



# Better Quality and Reduced Quantity food and drinks in Pacific Settings

Supported by HPA

# Project Background

- The Pacific Advisory Group identified that Pacific cultures generally **valued the 'quantity' of foods/drinks** over the **nutritional 'quality'** of the food and cited family and church functions as evident of this culture in practice.
- Hence, recommendations to HPA was to address the issue of 'quality and quantity' of foods/drinks consumed by Pacific peoples in New Zealand.
- Evidence shows nutritional quality foods/drinks contributes to many **nutrition-related diseases** affecting Pacific people.
- The HPA contracted Heart Foundation to develop and deliver appropriate **key messages/concept about providing better quality and reduced quantity of foods/drinks in Pacific settings.**

# Project Approach

- **Literature Review**
- **Pacific Community Research**
  - Exploring Quantity vs Quality (7 focus groups + 8 key informant)
  - Understanding eating regular behaviour (3 focus groups)
- **Develop concept & key messages**
- **Test concept & key messages**
  - Testing concepts (1 group + 4 paired interviews)
- **Developing final concept & messages for HPA**



# Key Literature Review Findings

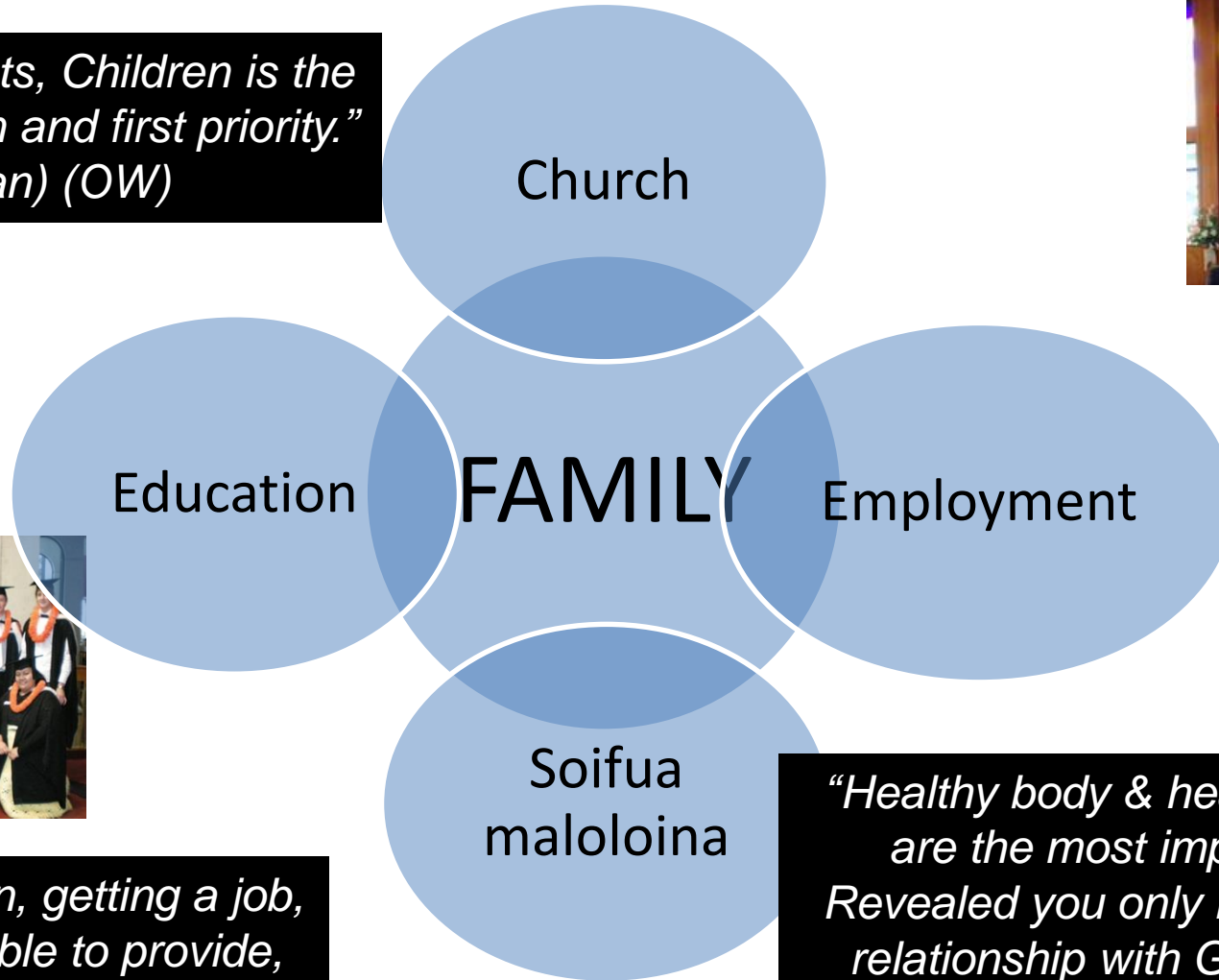
- Aim : to explore the **cultural values** that underpin the **social norm** of 'quantity over quality' in food and drinks among Pacific peoples.
- 1) **Symbolism of food** in its role to **express love & hospitality**
  - social interaction, fellowship and strengthening relationships; reciprocity
- 2) **Reputation and Shame/Fakama**
  - social expectations of being a good host and a pressure of upholding a good reputation impacts on the abundance of food offered as it is considered a measure of success of an event to Pacific peoples.

# Findings

- 1) Priorities
- 2) Health is...
- 3) Role of Food
- 4) Quality Vs Quantity
- 5) Readiness for Change



# 1. Priorities



*Family, Parents, Children is the most common and first priority.”  
(Men, Samoan) (OW)*



*Education, getting a job, being able to provide, breaking the cycle.”  
(Youth, Samoan)*

*“Healthy body & healthy mind are the most important. Revealed you only have good relationship with God if you have good health, good health is central to success in education and work etc.” (TW)*

## 2. Health is...

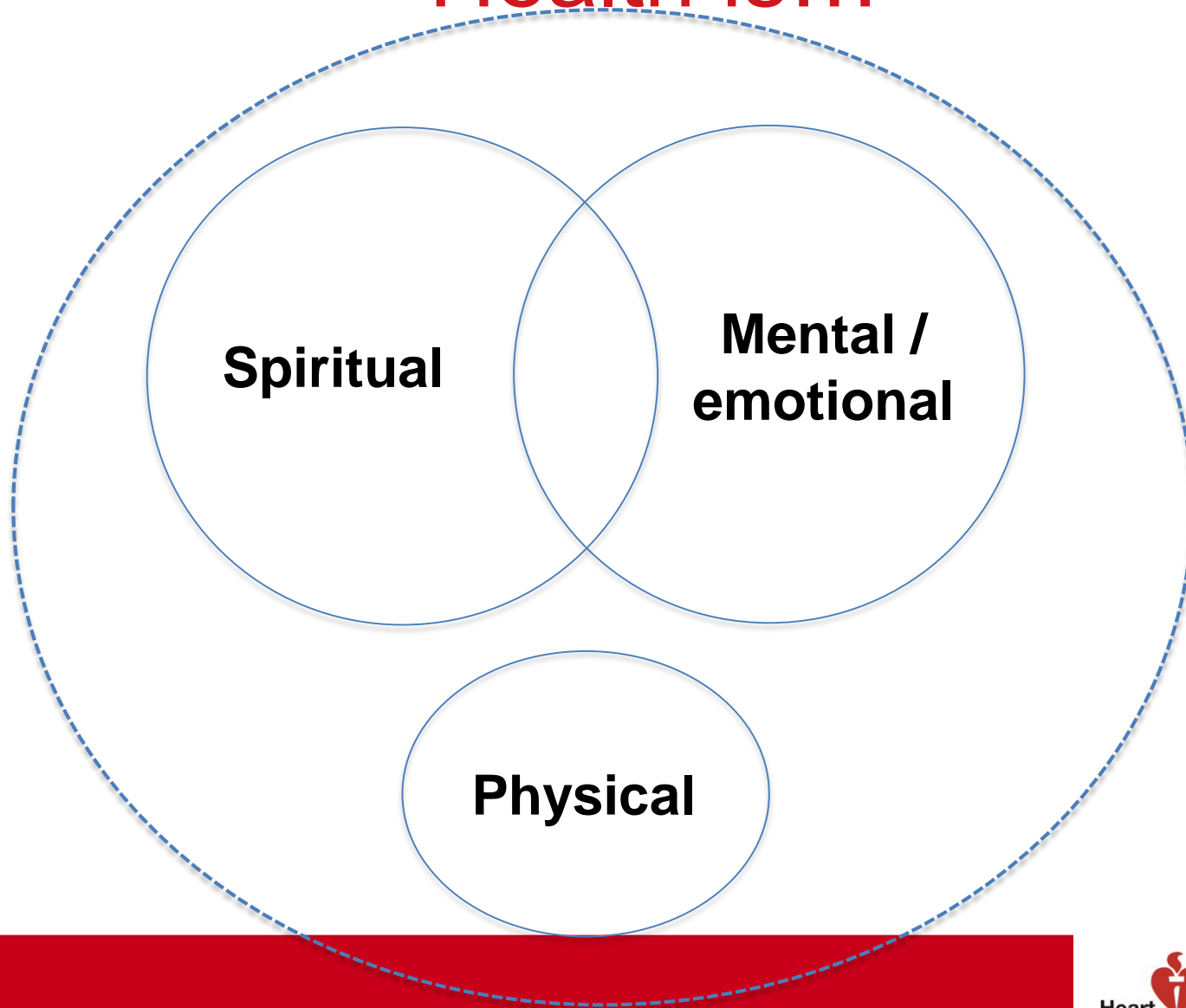
- *“When everything is good”*
- Defined in a holistic manner
- Also referred to as *Soifua maloloina*
  - *“Good health to me is the whole person. This is the balance of Physical, Mental, Social and Spiritual Health”(Minister’s wife, Tonga) (FCMW)*
  - *“Healthy body and healthy mind are the most important. Revealed you only have good relationship with God if you have good health, good health is central to success in education and work etc.” (TW)*

## 2. Health is...

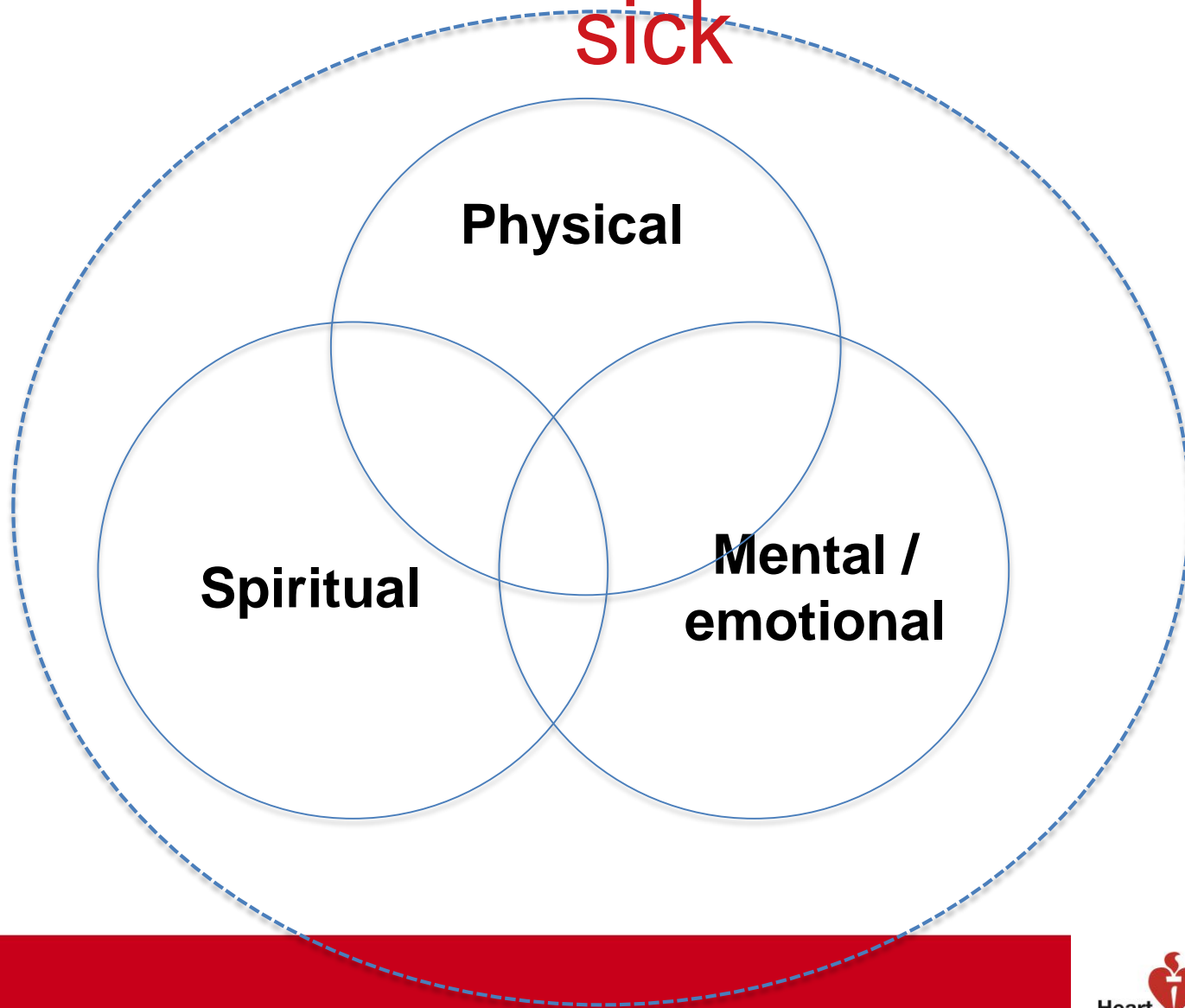
- Being 'happy' → healthy emotionally
  - *“happy means my daughter is fed and we have a roof over our head. When my daughter is happy, I’m happy”*
  - *“having nothing to worry about”*
- Spiritual health supercedes physical health
- Many perceived health only in terms of veges & fruits
- Physical health was not a priority until a family member became sick

*“Before we didn’t care about what we eat, but then my husband became sick with diabetes and we had to change the way we eat. I had to cook food differently, so we can eat as a family with my husband ” (Women group, Samoan)*

# Health is...



Health is..... when someone is  
**sick**



# 3. Role of Food

## The role of food differs by occasion and settings

*“At home you cook what you need but when it is outside of the home you do the best and more. You plan for the occasion” (Men group) (OM)*

### HOME (without guests)

- Food in the home is primarily for sustenance
- Meals in the home are **unplanned** with convenience foods and based on **affordability**
- Meals are simple with no cultural expectations or risk of being judged for the quality and quantity of food served
- **Key decision makers for food purchase and meals in the home is primarily the mother.** Although she is influenced by what the children and father desire to eat and budgetary constraints

# 3. Role of Food

## FAKAAFE (Hosting with food)

### Hosts perspectives

- An **expression of love and wealth**
- **Reputation** is significant and a priority to maintain the family name
- **More you give, more blessing received**
- providing large quantities of food/drinks is a strongly **entrenched value and belief system** when hosting
- Measure of the success of the event

### Guests response to host

- Measure of success
- Having insufficient food is perceived as bringing shame “fakama” to the host and the family/church.
- Hosts will be **judged** according to what (social status) and how much is served
- *“As a recipients, I expect that they (host) are doing their best.”*





# 3. Role of Food

- *“Food is a core part of our culture-Symbolizes **respect, love, self-esteem**, good relationship. Any cultural event without food is not a Tongan way and no one will turn up.” (Women group, Tongan) (TW)*
- *For Tongan culture and I suppose for Samoan culture too – **quantity relates to respect and hospitality** as well as you make enough food for people not only to eat but to take home.” (Minister’s wife, Samoan) (RMW)*
- *“If food expectations to each level are not met then **there will be a bad story behind it**” (FTM)*



# 4. Quality & Quantity

The perceptions and expectations of quality and quantity of food varies between hosting an event or guests versus a meal prepared in the home for the family

## ■ Home

- Fast and convenience is quality e.g. fast food
- Tasty/Presentation but unhealthy cultural foods supersede health
- Quantity for the family- **go with budget**
- Social status of food – not an issue

## ■ Fakaafe

- Quality food for special occasions is perceived as providing large quantities of food to ensure the guests have more than sufficient food to eat and food to take home. The youth group quoted **“quality is quantity” (FG)**
- Social status of food – important
- the **cost not an issue**

# 4. Quality & Quantity

## Other perceptions of quality

- **Effort** required to prepare the food (eg rice vs taro in coconut cream)
- **Cost /expense** involved (eg water versus soft drinks)
- Nutrition quality – e.g. more vegetables
- Taste and presentation

*Food abundancy comes first as it's better to over feed someone than to underfeed" (FTM)*

*"If the expected number is 500 we need to top up by another extra 100 to make up for 600 in the preparation of food. Surplus is always needed ... Quantity is needed in hosting big occasion like wedding, funeral etc because quantity makes the host feel proud and raise his self-esteem" (TMW)*

## 4. Quality & Quantity

- Most Pacific recognised the **social economic costs** on the families and the community **to serve large quantities food / drinks at Pacific functions**
- **However**, the social cost of not conforming to the cultural norms is more overwhelming. The consequences results in “perceived shame” on the family and community.
- Family reputation was at stake and significant for generations
  - *“E pala le ma’a ae le pala le tala - (i.e. Stones will erode away but words will never decay)*
  - *“E fai vae o tala” – (i.e. Story has legs)*
- Conforming to the cultural norms of quality and quantity creates **happy guests and this provides satisfaction, honour and respect** to the family which **far outweighs any financial or health costs**

# 5. Readiness for change

- Key community leaders and the community themselves strongly affirmed that the culture of giving more than is required is a highly valued belief system that is not easily broken and communities are currently resistant to change
  - *“We follow what we were brought up with in terms of food to be in big occasions, more like a habit and inherited” (TW)*
  - *“You can’t change what we have grown up for example the amount of food that you provide for something” (OW)*
  - *“You can’t change it. You can only change it in your family. Like in the church, as if it can change (Mean I don’t think so)” (OW)*

# 5. Readiness for change

- The young people are open to change, but are respectful to their elders and their culture and their parents' values and belief system. Hence, they were quoted as saying “they were only willing to change when their parents' generation passes away”
  - *“No the faifeau can't change things – the people won't accept it. We can only change things when our parents are gone, all the old people are gone. We can't change them”*

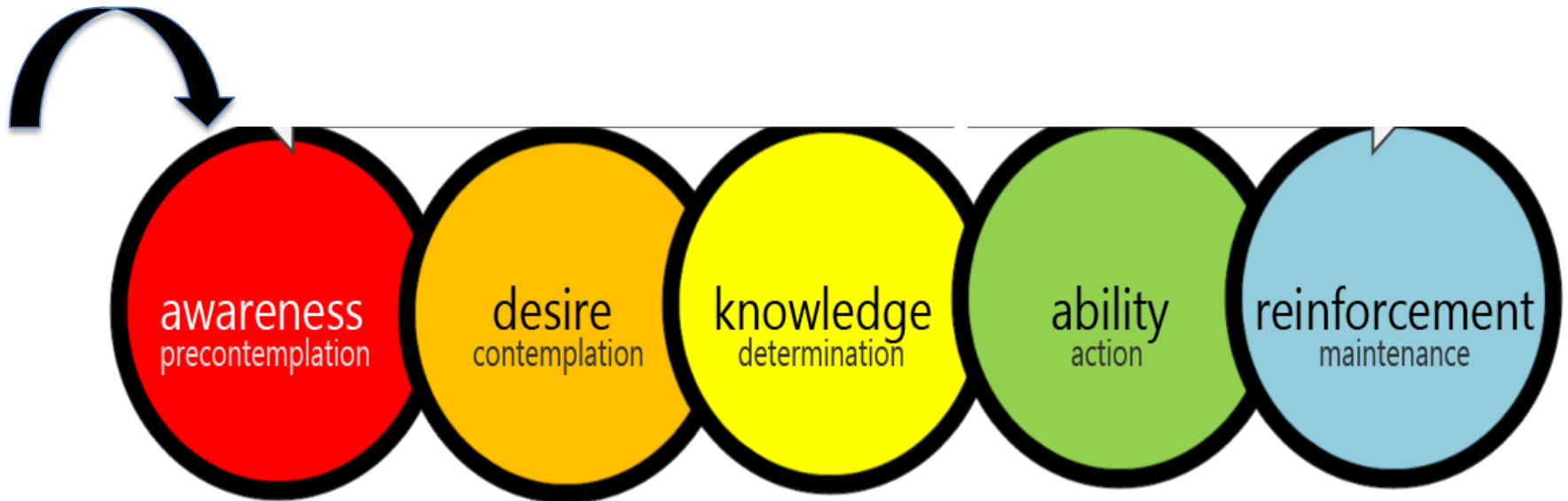
# 6. Behaviour Change

- Any behavioural changes to eating healthy is only when a **person is diagnosed with an illness** and the family is forced to change eating habits but only for the sick person
- Hence, Pacific are more **reactive** to change and appear to have no motivation or the need for change
- Some questioned “**Why should we change?**”
- Some wanted to change, but **didn't know how to change**
- Some felt that the women committee or the church Minister can drive changes



# Behaviour Change Model

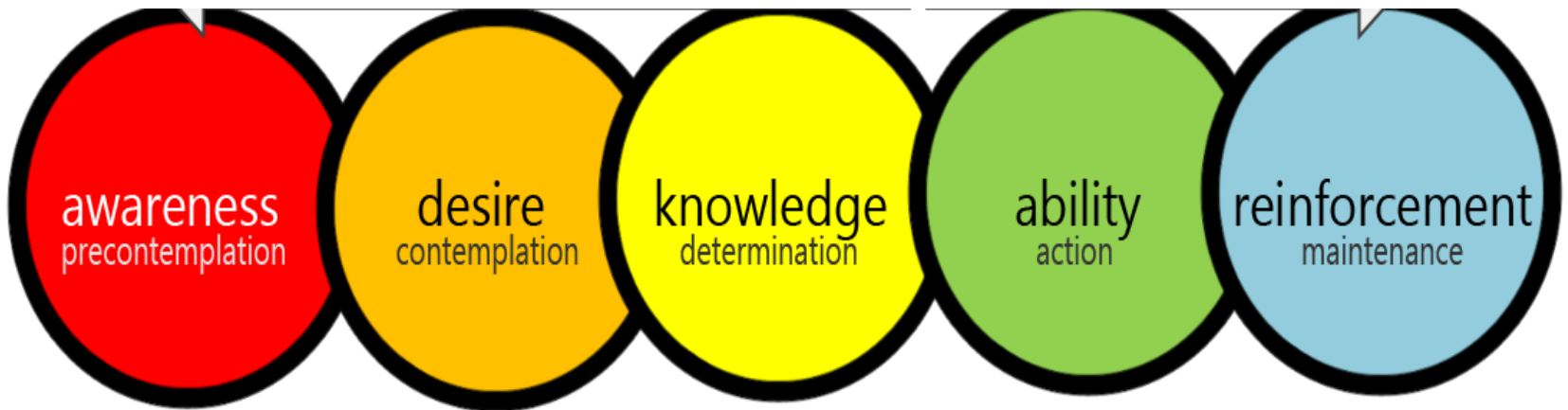
How to move  
Pacific from  
here?





# Key Concept & Messages

# Empowering Pacific To Change



# Empowering To Change

- Focus messages on **future generations** with the support of **older** generations
- Using **Pacific champions** that have changed their lifestyle to share their story about the why and the how
- Using **Pacific leaders** to help deliver the message of change (ie ministers, sports people)
- Using **shock treatment to stipulate the need to change**
- Workshops in the community for awareness and dealing with **misconceptions**
- Workshops for cooking demonstrations to show the how
- Strengthening **community action** for change

# Acknowledgements

- Church ministers and their wives, men's fellowship groups, women's fellowship groups and youth from the following churches:
  - Tongan Methodist Church, Mangere
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  - Ranui Pacific Island Presbyterian Church
  - Free Church of Tonga, Mangere
  - Tongan Methodist Church, Northcote
  - St Mary's Catholic Church, Avondale
- Project Team
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