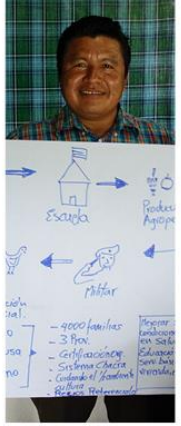
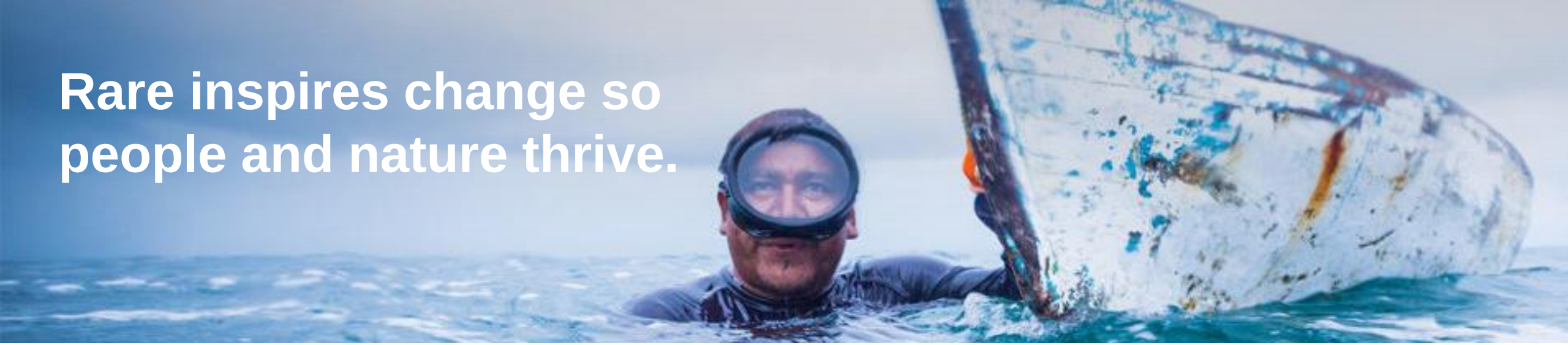


CENTER FOR BEHAVIOR & THE ENVIRONMENT

Advancing environmental outcomes through Behavior Centered Design

Sam Gray



Rare inspires change so people and nature thrive.

Rare has run nearly 500 behavior change campaigns in more than 60 countries

Rare's behavior change campaigns, on average, increase adoption by 18 percentage points

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Transform the environmental field by equipping environmentalists everywhere with the science of human behavior

Almost every environmental challenge has at least one thing in common.

Behavior

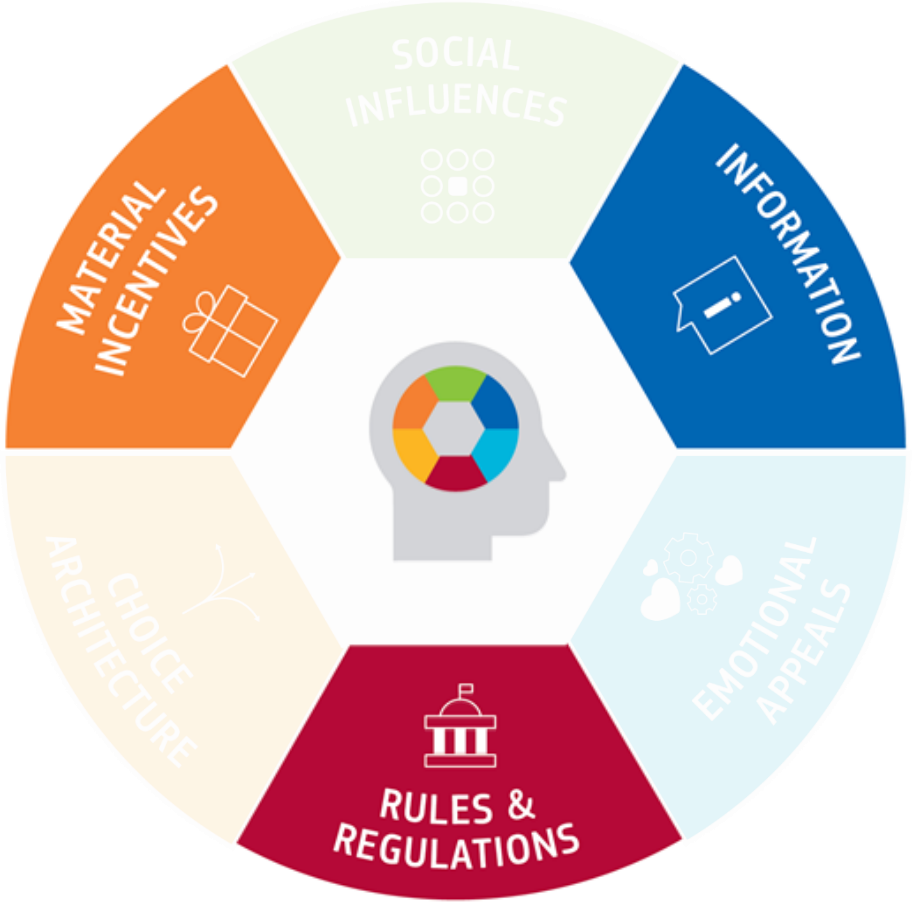
We have a spectrum of effortful and automatic ways of thinking and deciding.

Weighing options, calculating costs and benefits

Reacting automatically, quickly

The most common tactics for behavior change are designed for one kind of thinking.

- Material incentives (‘pay them’)
- Rules and regulations (‘stop them’)
- Information (‘tell them’)



These levers are sometimes necessary but often do not work on their own.

- Financial incentives can backfire.
- Payments can crowd-out other motivators.
- Incentives can drain limited resources.
- Fines can be seen as just the ‘cost’ for behavior.

- Rules often need enforcement.
- Rules do not work if norms are misaligned.

- Correcting an information-deficit rarely leads to lasting behavior change or even a change in beliefs.
- Caring/knowing is not a pre-requisite to change.

The levers of behavior change

Emotions drive us to act.

People take the lead **from others**.

The context in which we make decisions matters… a lot.

Emotional appeals

Using emotional messages in addition to or instead of appeals to reason

2009

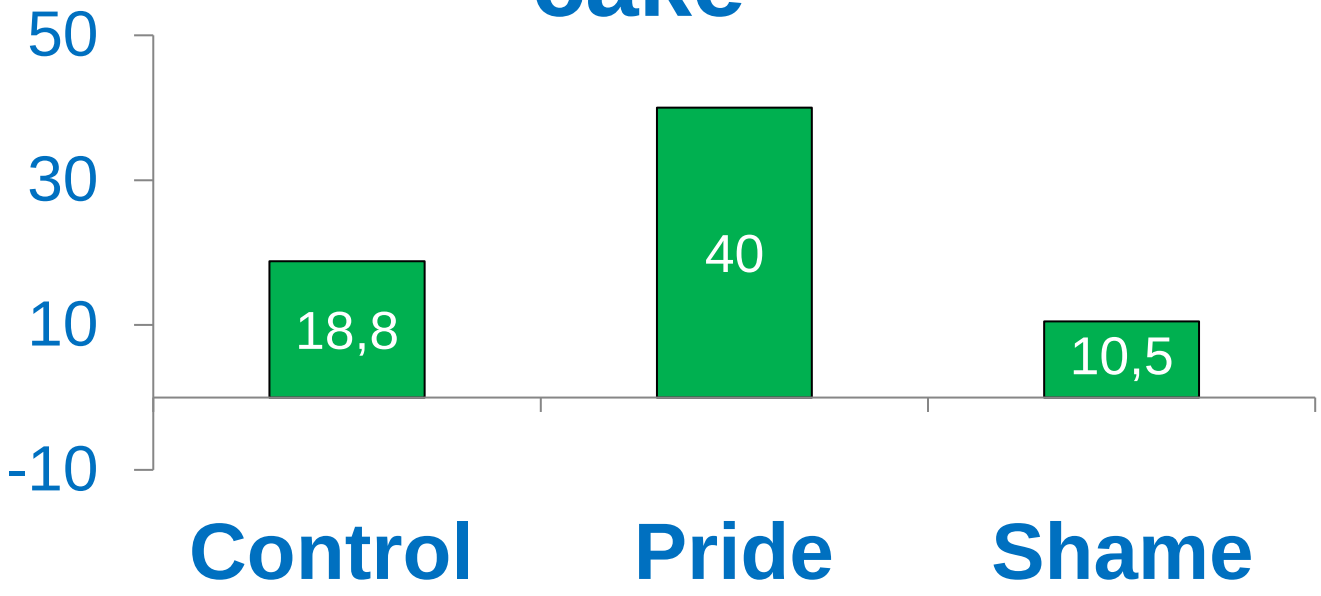
Affective Forecasting and Self-Control: Why Anticipating Pride Wins Over Anticipating Shame in a Self-Regulation Context

Vanessa M. Patrick
University of Houston

HaeEun Helen Chun
Cornell University, hc633@cornell.edu

Deborah J. Macinnis
University of Southern California

% that completely resisted eating the cake



Patrick et al, 2009

RESEARCH ARTICLE

The influence of anticipated pride and guilt on pro-environmental decision making

Claudia R. Schneider[1,2,3]*, Lisa Zaval[1,2,3], Elke U. Weber[2,3,4,5,6], Ezra M. Markowitz[2,7]

"We find evidence that anticipating one's positive future emotional state from green action… leads to higher pro-environmental behavioral intentions compared to anticipating one's negative emotional state from inaction. This finding suggests a rethinking in the domain of environmental and climate change messaging, which has traditionally favored inducing negative emotions such as guilt."

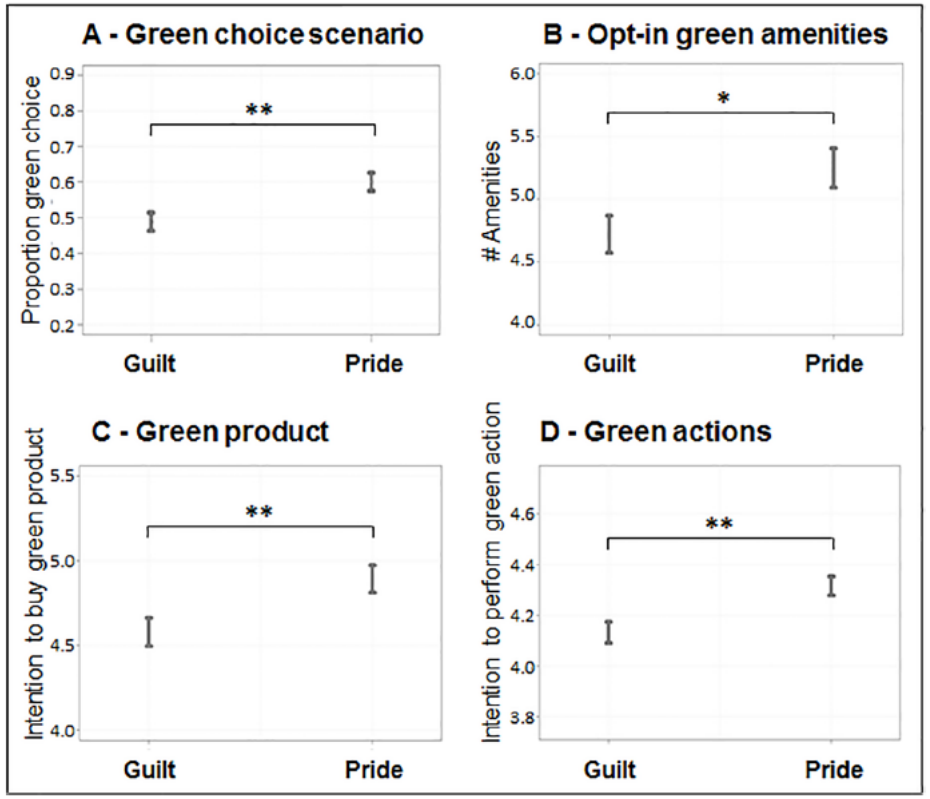
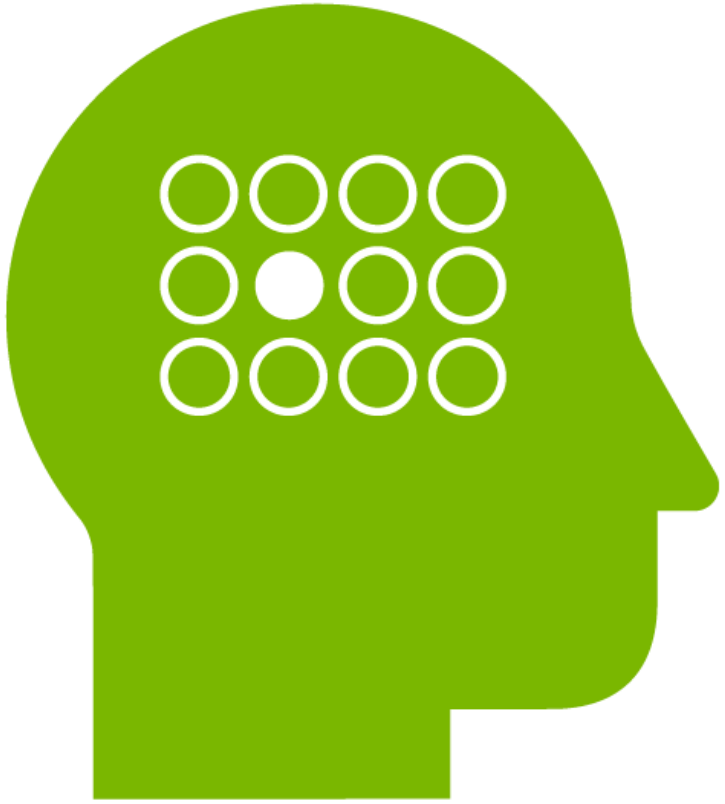


Fig 1. Influence of pride and guilt inductions on pro-environmental behavior per outcome measure.



Social Influences

The behavior, beliefs, and expectations of others

Static norm.
“30% of Americans make an effort to limit their meat consumption.”

Dynamic norm.
“Over the last 5 years, 30% of Americans have started to make an effort to limit their meat consumption.”

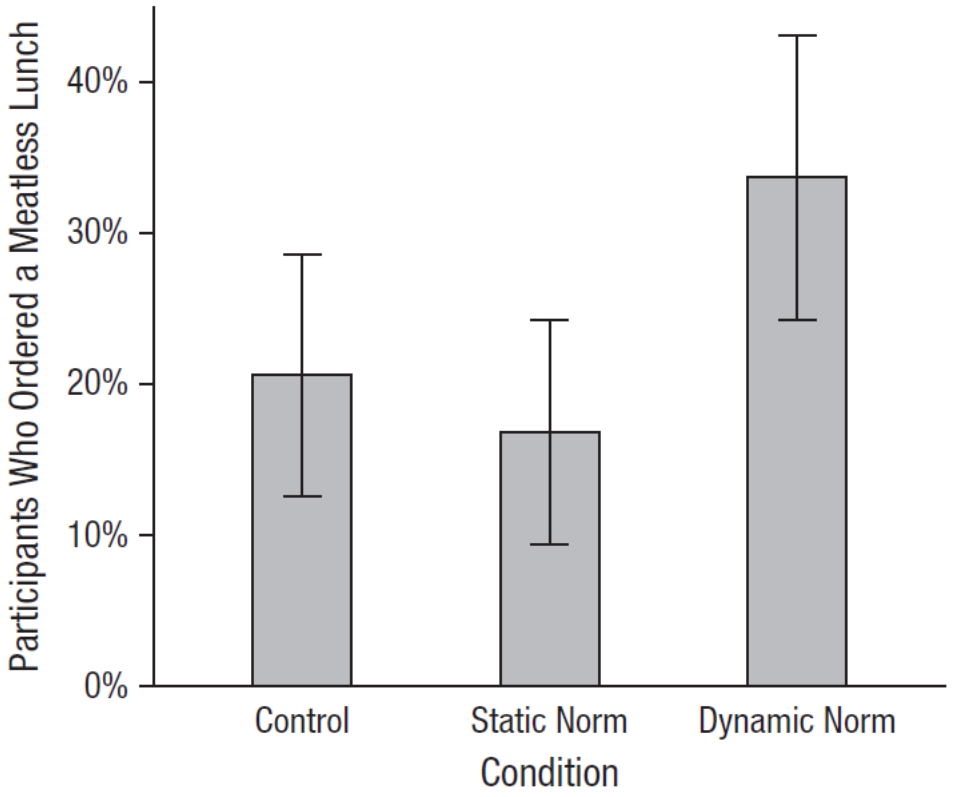
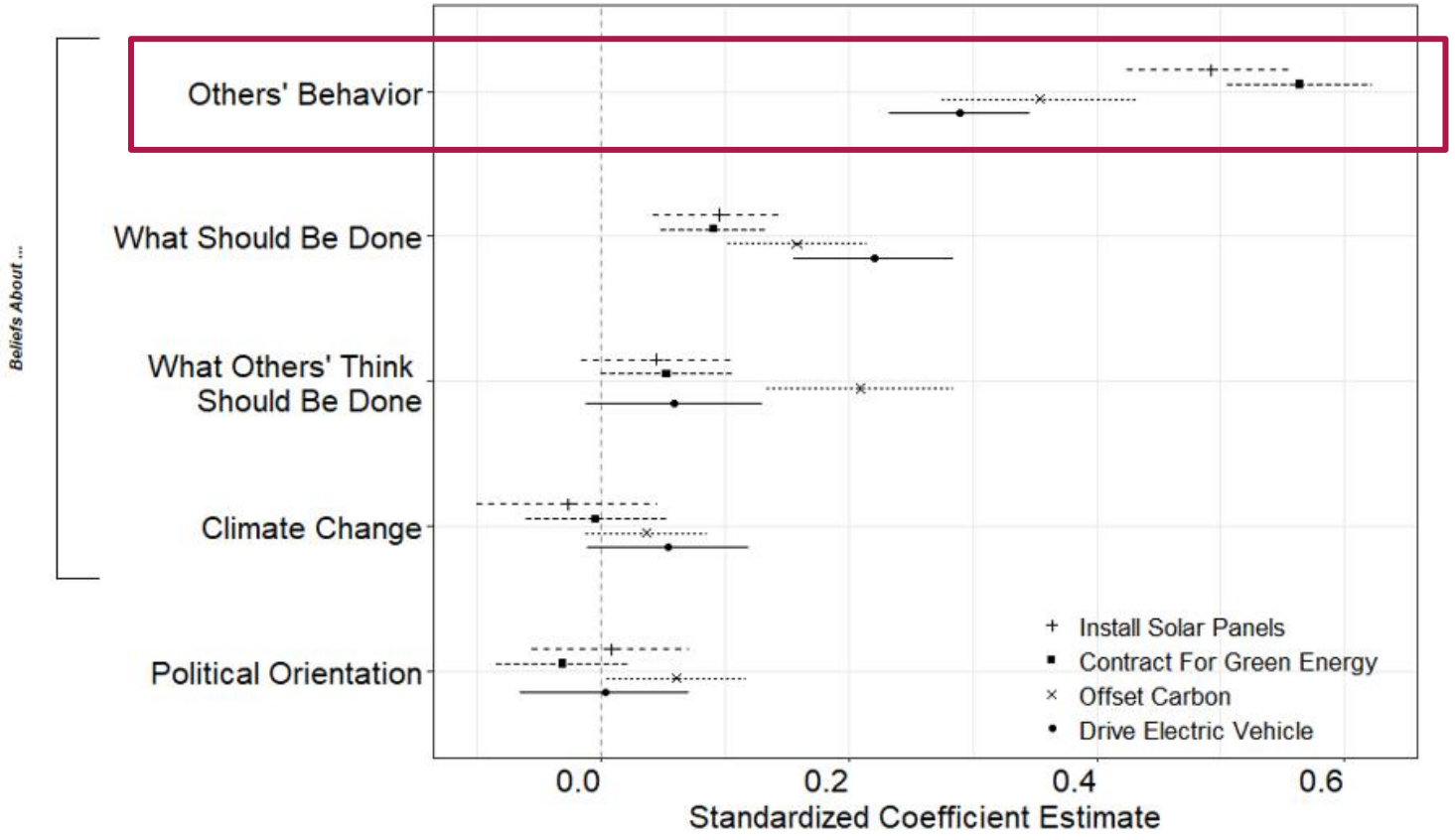


Fig. 3. Results from Experiment 4: the percentage of patrons who ordered a lunch without meat in each condition. Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

Dynamic Norms Promote Sustainable Behavior, Even if It Is Counternormative

Gregg Sparkman and Gregory M. Walton
Department of Psychology, Stanford University

The biggest predictor of people's intention to do these things is whether they think other people are doing them.



Helping the Climate Because Others Do: An Exploratory Analysis of the Psychological Predictors of Intention to Perform High Impact Pro-Environmental Behaviors

Erik Thulin[1]* and Abdurakhim Rakhimov[2]

Choice architecture

The context in which information and choices are presented

50 simple ways to make your life greener

Expert tips on how to be kinder to the planet – from cooking and cleaning to fashion and finance

Domestic uptake of green energy promoted by opt-out tariffs

Felix Ebeling[1] and Sebastian Lotz[2,3]*

Photo Credit: Jason Houston for Rare

Empowering interventions to promote sustainable lifestyles: Testing the habit discontinuity hypothesis in a field experiment

Bas Verplanken*, Deborah Roy

At the University of Cambridge, doubling the vegetarian offerings increased the proportion of plant-based sales by up to 80%

Garnett, E. & Balmford, A. & Sandbrook, C. & Pilling, M. (2019). Impact of increasing vegetarian availability on meal selection and sales in cafeterias. Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences. 116. 10.1073/pnas.1907207116.

Available at:
https://behavior.rare.org

EMOTIONAL APPEALS

Using emotional messages in addition to or instead of reason

Leverage emotions

- Tap into core emotions such as fear, happiness, sadness, and anger

Personalize the message

- Put a human face on campaigns and focus on a single story over abstract statistics
- Tailor messages [illegible] them personally relevant, palatable, and appealing to the target a[illegible]

[illegible]S

[illegible]ctations of others

[illegible]ie

- [illegible]e behavior public/visible instead of [illegible]

[illegible]al expectations

- [illegible]hlight the possibility of social sanctions for doing undesired behavior
- Promote descriptive norms that show cases of success and good behavior
- Identify credible and trusted messengers doing good behaviors
- Facilitate peer or community exchanges where others can observe the desired behavior and/or gain social support

Eliminate excuses for not engaging in the behavior

- Encourage public commitments or pledges to drive desired behavior

MATERIAL INCENTIVES

Increasing or decreasing real or perceived costs, time, or effort for doing a behavior

Make it easy or the alternative hard

- Make the desired behavior more convenient and accessible to do (e.g., remove barriers, provide substitutes)
- Introduce friction points to make the undesired behavior more difficult

Give rewards or penalties

- Reward to incentivize or reinforce good behavior
- Penalize or fine for cases of undesired behavior

INFORMATION

Information about what a behavior is, why it matters, and how to do it

Provide step-by-step instructions

- Offer workshops or trainings on a behavior
- Provide resources that contain how-to knowledge for a behavior

Build awareness and understanding

- Provide informational forums, meetings, or materials that fill knowledge gaps about a behavior and its importance
- Give feedback on performing a behavior

RULES & REGULATIONS

Rules that constrict or promote a behavior

Mandate behavior

- Enact mandates that require certain behaviors

Prohibit behavior

- Enact prohibitions that limit or forbid certain behaviors

CHOICE ARCHITECTURE

The context in which information is presented

Direct attention

- Make desired behavior the default option
- Make desired behavior salient to direct attention to it (or away from something else)

Simplify messages and decisions

- Streamline complex processes (without changing major costs or benefits)
- Provide decision-aids for behaviors with many steps or options

Use timely moments and prompts

- Target moments of transition and habit formation
- Provide prompts and reminders about behavior

Facilitate planning and goal setting

- Support implementation intentions for doing a behavior
- Use commitment devices where present decisions restrict future ones

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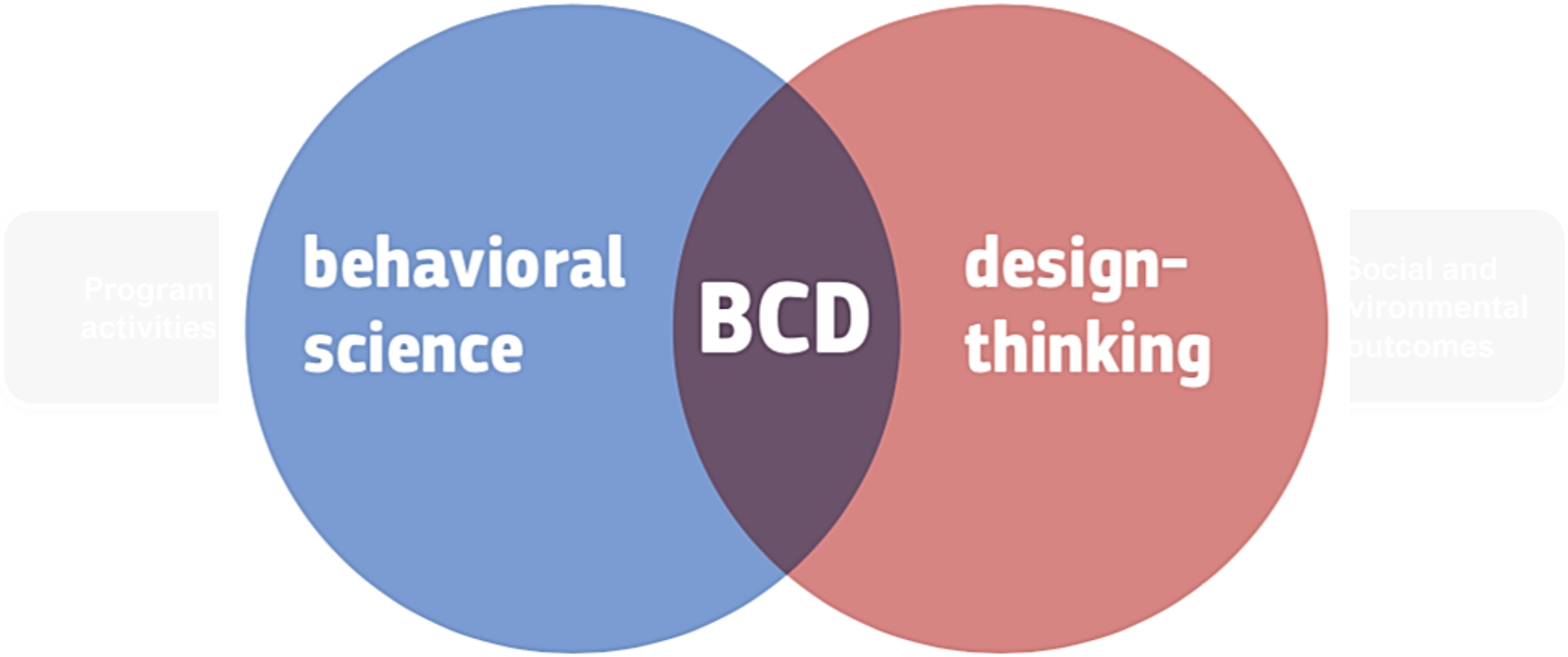
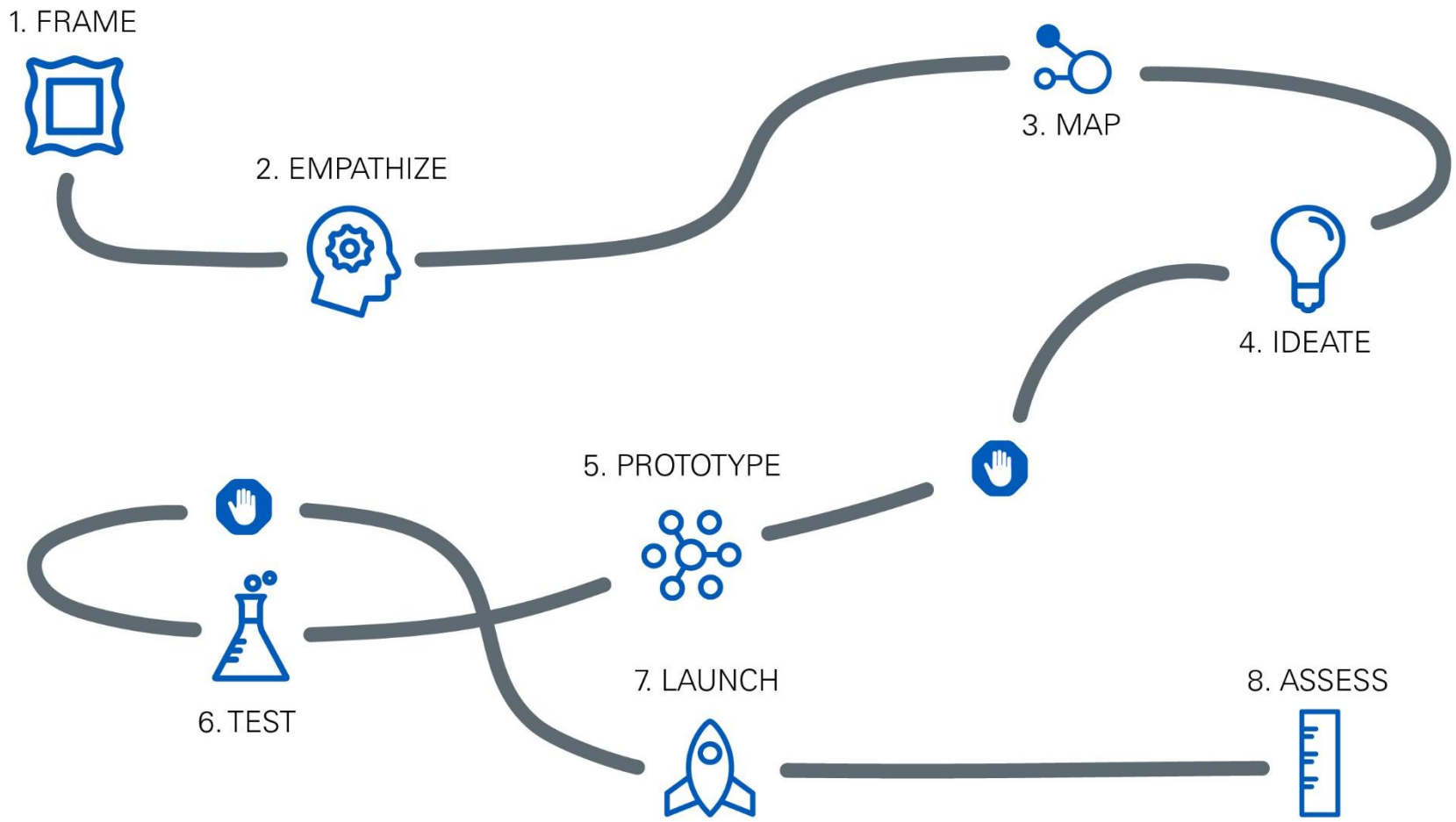
Behavior-Centered Design



Behavior-centered design



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