

Behavior Change and the Next Generation of Environmental Stewards

Jess Lasoff-Santos and Katie Williamson



CENTER FOR
BEHAVIOR & THE
ENVIRONMENT



SEAS

SCHOOL FOR ENVIRONMENT
AND SUSTAINABILITY
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

ISEA Café

February 16, 2020

Today's Objectives

- Define behavior change
- Share the importance of understanding your audience
- Provide a framework and key strategies for understanding behavior change
- Share real world examples of behavior change
- Practice applying behavior change concepts to encourage stewardship from ISEA visitors

Who Are We?



Jess Lasoff-Santos

(he/him/his)

jesanto@umich.edu

PhD Candidate,
School for Environment &
Sustainability,
University of Michigan
Ann Arbor, MI

My goals: Finish my dissertation before my funding runs out; support individuals and neighborhood resilience initiatives as they prepare for the climate emergency.



Katie Williamson

(she/her/hers)

kwilliamson@rare.org

Senior Associate,
Center for Behavior
& the Environment,
Rare
Arlington, VA

My goal: Supporting environmental practitioners and organizations in using behavioral and social science so they can be more effective in their work.

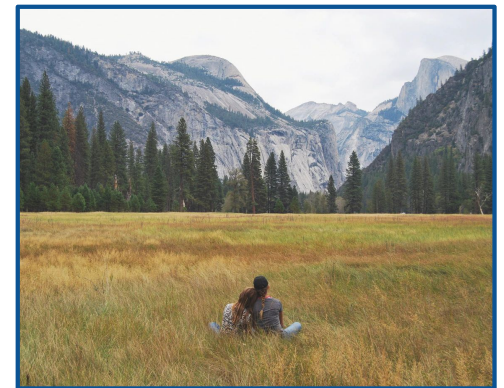
Setting the Stage

- Environmental behavior change comes out of a tradition of environmental and conservation psychology

Setting the Stage

- What is environmental psychology?

“The relationship between environments and human behaviors”



What Do We Mean By “Behavior”?

Beliefs

What you know or accept to be true

Attitudes

What you think is good or bad

Intentions

What you want to or plan to do

Behaviors

What you do in response to something

Behavior change

When people do something differently

Let's practice: What is a behavior?

Read the passage on plastic waste and answer the questions that follow:

- What is the environmental problem?
- Who are the actors contributing to this problem?
- What are those actors doing now (current behavior) that contributes to the problem?
- What are the target behaviors for these actors?
- What are the motivations, barriers, and beliefs related to the behaviors you identified?

Passage: Plastic Waste

Plastic pollution has received a lot of recent attention due to its increasing presence in natural habitats, especially in oceans. The marine transport and fishing industry, poorly managed waste streams from households and businesses, and plastic pellets and granules from consumer goods are some of the major sources of ocean plastic.

Fishers and industrial boats dump waste while out at sea as a convenient receptacle for unwanted or single-use waste. Individuals and businesses consume a lot of plastic when they purchase many common items, including packaging and storage, straws, storage containers, and health and beauty products. Businesses opt to use a lot of plastic because it is lightweight, cheap, and durable.

Unfortunately, a minority of these items are reused or recycled by households and businesses, and most end up in landfills, open lands, or water bodies. Some businesses are now catching onto a growing trend of being 'zero-waste,' requiring individuals to bring their own containers or supporting fees for plastic bags. Some municipal governments are enacting clearer and stricter regulations on recycling waste, and some individuals are trying to reduce and reuse the plastic they consume in their daily lives.

Identify: Environmental problem

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Identify: Actors

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Identify: Current behavior

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Fishers and industrial boats **dump waste** while out at sea as a convenient receptacle for unwanted or single-use waste. Individuals and businesses **consume a lot of plastic when they purchase many common items**, including packaging and storage, straws, storage containers, and health and beauty products. Businesses opt to use a lot of plastic because it is lightweight, cheap, and durable.

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Identify: Target behavior

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Identify: Motivations, barriers, beliefs

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**Share
in the
Chat Box:**

**What is one behavior
you've tried to change for
yourself or someone else
(at home or work)?**

Designing for Behavior Change

First: Identify the Behavior

- What is the behavior you want to change?

First: Identify the Behavior

- What is the behavior you want to change?

BE SPECIFIC!

Second: Identify the Audience

- **Whose** behavior do you want to change?
- What do you really **know** about your audience?
- How can you **help** your audience choose behaviors which align with their beliefs and attitudes, rather than what we assume are their beliefs and attitudes?





Some Research Methods to Understand Your Audience

Surveys



Google Forms



Some Research Methods to Understand Your Audience

Surveys



Google Forms



Key Informant Interviews



zoom

Some Research Methods to Understand Your Audience

Surveys



Google Forms



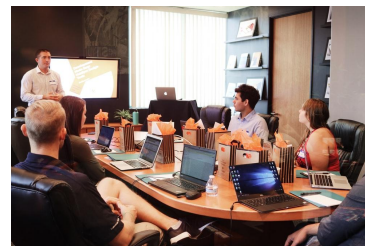
Key Informant Interviews



zoom



Focus Groups



Some Research Methods to Understand Your Audience

Surveys



Google Forms



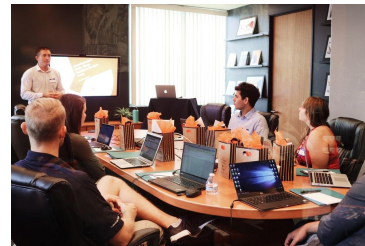
Key Informant Interviews



zoom



Focus Groups



Observation

Some Research Methods to Understand Your Audience

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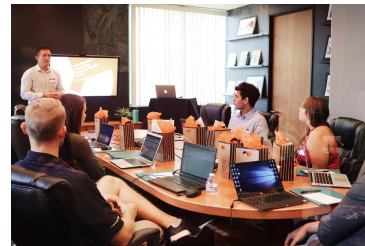
Key Informant Interviews



zoom



Focus Groups



Observation



Participant Photography

Levers of Behavior Change

See it: Our Brains in Action

On the next slide,
please remember as many of the
following words as you can.

Don't write anything down.

Remember these words:

Table

Wood

Sit

Cushion

Legs

Swivel

Seat

Stool

Couch

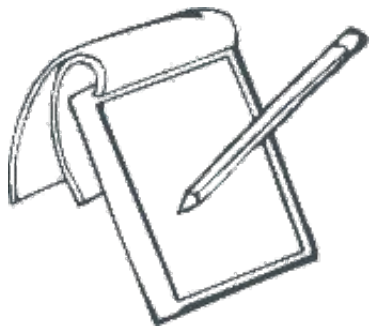
Sitting

Recliner

Rocking

Sofa

Bench



Take a moment to
write down all the
words you can
remember.

Did you remember...?

Table

Desk

Cushion

Sit

Chair

No 'chair' here!

Table

Wood

Sit

Cushion

Legs

Swivel

Seat

Stool

Couch

Sitting

Recliner

Rocking

Sofa

Bench

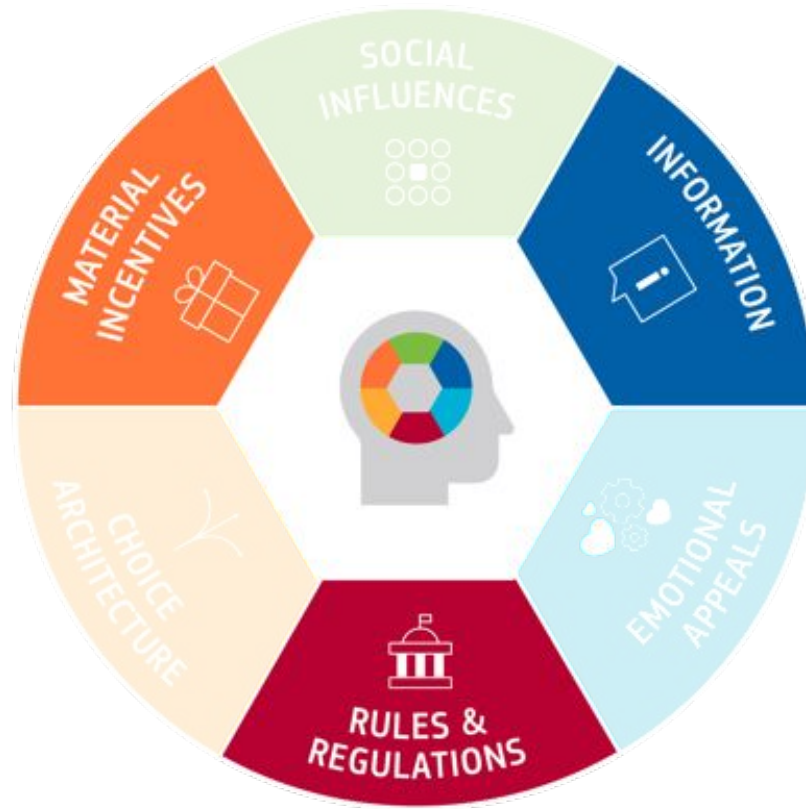


We have a spectrum of effortful and automatic ways of thinking and deciding.

Levers of Behavior Change



Levers of Behavior Change



Levers of Behavior Change



Material Incentives



Rules & Regulations



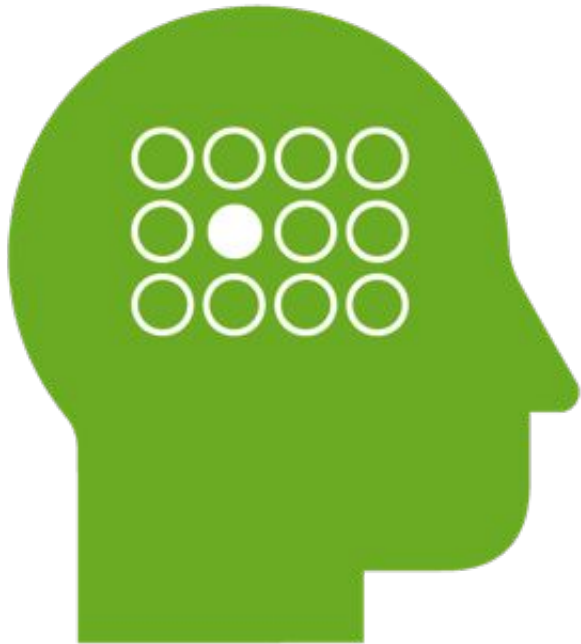
Information



Emotional Appeals



Social Influences



Choice Architecture



Keep Britain Tidy

Test yourself!

How well do you remember
the levers of behavior change?





Showcasing farmers in a community who are champions of sustainable farming leads farmers to feel happy and proud of their work and continue farming sustainably.

1. Emotional Appeals
2. Social Influences
3. Material Incentives



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1. **Emotional Appeals**
2. Social Influences
3. Material Incentives



Some stores offer cash and discounts for those who bring in and recycle bottles and cans.

1. Choice Architecture
2. Information
3. Material Incentives



Some stores offer cash and discounts for those who bring in and recycle bottles and cans.

1. Choice Architecture
2. Information
- 3. Material Incentives**



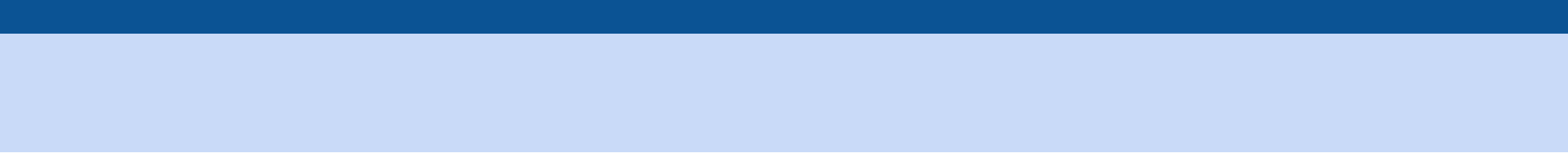
By serving food on smaller plates, people will eat and waste less.

1. Information
2. Choice Architecture
3. Rules and Regulations



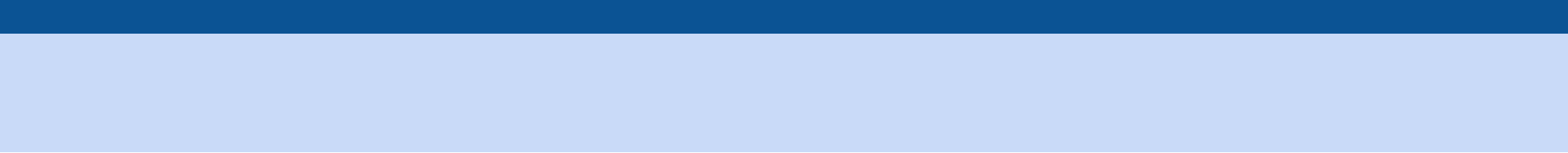
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1. Information
- 2. Choice Architecture**
3. Rules and Regulations



For one year, UK government departments publicly posted energy data and saved 10% in carbon emissions.

1. Information
2. Rules and Regulations
3. Social Influences



For one year, UK government departments publicly posted energy data and saved 10% in carbon emissions.

1. Information
2. Rules and Regulations
- 3. Social Influences**

Case study: Which levers?



Case study: Which levers?



Case study: Which levers?



Key strategies for crafting a message

- Communicate about the target behavior in a clear, concrete, and unambiguous way
- Tailor messages to make them personally relevant, relatable, and appealing
- Share that people are currently doing the target behavior
- Make behavior observable
- Leverage credible and trusted messengers doing the target behavior
- Streamline complex decisions (and information) to focus on key information or actions

Activity: Application to ISEA

Consider the following problem:

During the “stewardship discussion,” you have the chance to guide students toward becoming better stewards of the Great Lakes.

- *What are specific behaviors you can encourage as part of this stewardship?*
- *What do you think are some motivations and barriers for these behaviors?*
- *Consider the behavior change levers and strategies. How can you use these tools to encourage behavior change? What can you say to promote stewardship behaviors, while accounting for the levers and strategies we learned about today?*

Tips for Breakout Rooms!



Discussion

- What did you learn? What surprised you? What was challenging?
- What is information you feel like you still need to learn about the ISEA participants?
- What levers are you able to use when working with participants?

Looking for more ideas?



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Water Pollution & Behavior Change

Human beings and the ecosystems we inhabit rely on clean water. This Solution Search contest focuses on unearthing existing and successful solutions that are reducing water pollution by changing behaviors.

[VIEW SOLUTIONS →](#)

Share



Thanks!

Jess Lasoff-Santos

(he/him/his)

jesanto@umich.edu



Katie Williamson

(she/her/hers)

kwilliamson@rare.org

