

Applying the Behaviour Change Wheel

A very brief guide

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The Behaviour Change Wheel (BCW) provides a structured approach to designing or updating behaviour change interventions and strategies.

Its purpose is to promote a systematic and comprehensive analysis of the available options using behaviour change theory and the available evidence. It facilitates application of behavioural science to ensure that component parts of an intervention or strategy act synergistically.

The activities in the BCW process for designing an intervention strategy are:

1. **Behavioural target specification:** Identify *the precise goal* of the intervention in terms of what behaviour/s need/s to change, to what degree, in what way, and in whom.
2. **Behavioural diagnosis:** Find out *what would need to change* for the behaviour to change in terms of Capability (physical and psychological), Opportunity (physical and social) and/or Motivation (reflective and automatic) in the target population, group or individual.
3. **Intervention Strategy selection:** Use the behavioural diagnosis to decide what *'intervention functions'* to apply: Education, Persuasion, Incentivisation, Coercion, Training, Restriction, Environmental restructuring, Modelling, Enablement.
4. **Implementation strategy selection:** Choose from among a range of *policy options* to support long-term implementation: Fiscal policy, Legislation, Regulation, Environmental planning, Communications, Service provision, Guidelines development.
5. **Selection of specific Behaviour Change Techniques:** Develop a *detailed intervention plan* by selecting from among a range of specific behaviour change techniques (elementary components of interventions such as goal-setting, providing rewards etc).
6. **Drafting the full intervention specification:** Create the detailed intervention

specification covering all aspects of *content and delivery* of the intervention structured around the chosen behaviour change techniques (content) and modes of delivery.

The sequencing of these activities will depend on the context and goals of the *key stakeholders*. For example, they may start with a blank slate and be willing to contemplate any of the implementation options, or the need may be to update an existing strategy. It will generally be necessary to cycle back and forth among the activities, refining and improving the proposed intervention strategy.

The APEASE criteria (Acceptability, Practicability, Effectiveness/cost-effectiveness, Affordability, Safety/side-effects, Equity) are applied when deciding on the intervention strategy and its implementation in the given context. These criteria should be applied in a structured way using available evidence combined with expert judgement.

Constraints on the development process (budget, timescale, human resources) will determine how much time and effort can be spent on the development process *itself*. Sometimes intervention development has to take place within a few days or weeks while on other occasions a more thorough development process is possible.

Monitoring and evaluation of performance of behaviour change interventions will usually be necessary because of the complexity of human behaviour and ever-changing contexts. There are many ways of doing this to suit different budgets and contexts. More expensive methods, such as 'Randomised Controlled Trials' often provide greater confidence in the findings, but not necessarily. It is important from the outset to specify how the evaluation will provide a basis for decision making and it should focus where possible on objective outcome measures.

Reading: Michie S, Atkins L, West R *The Behaviour Change Wheel: A Guide to Developing Interventions*. London: Silverback Publishing. www.behaviourchangewheel.com