HOW BEHAVIORAL INSIGHTS CAN IMPROVE WIC

Using Behavioral Science in Your Everyday Work

Dani Grodsky & Antonia Violante - ideas42

April 23, 2018
AGENDA

• What is ideas42 and behavioral science?

• The context of chronic scarcity

• Case Study: Our work in California

• Next steps for behavioral science and WIC

• Q&A
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What is ideas®?

We use theories of behavioral science and psychology to design solutions to some of the world’s most persistent social problems.
WE WORK WITH A WIDE RANGE OF PARTNERS

Non-profits

Governments

Foundations

Business
LET’S START WITH A GAME…
YOU HAVE ONE JOB...

Say out loud the color of the shape you see on the screen.
STANDARD DECISION MAKING MODEL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decision</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do I want outcome X?</td>
<td>What action must I take?</td>
<td>Outcome X occurs or not.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**BEHAVIORAL DECISION MAKING MODEL**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td>Am I in the mood?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t know</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- How difficult is it?
- What’s everyone else doing?
- Was I already “good” today?
- Will it take long?
- Can I just do it tomorrow?
WHO ARE WE, REALLY?
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IMAGINE...

As you come to a stop at a red light, you see a car on the other side of the street go right through the light. What might you think about this person?

- They have no patience
- They are a bad driver
- They don’t care about the safety others
- They have a pregnant woman going into labor in the back seat

Fundamental Attribution Error
WHAT’S THE MOST EFFECTIVE WAY TO HELP?
Our unofficial motto: 
Context Matters
CONTEXT HAS MULTIPLE MEANINGS
KEY INSIGHT: LIVING IN POVERTY = LIVING IN CHRONIC SCARCITY

When we’re short on a resource…

...we tend to tunnel on our most urgent task.

Can be helpful in the short term!

But dangerous when chronic.
THE TUNNEL
MEASURING SCARCITY’S IMPACT ON THE BRAIN

MEASURING SCARCITY’S IMPACT ON THE BRAIN

[Graph showing the effect of high and low income on Raven’s Matrices performance with data points for $300 and $3,000]

POVERTY ≠ PERSONAL FAILING

POVERTY ≠ CULTURAL PATHOLOGY

POVERTY = CHRONIC SCARCITY
HOW TO ALLEVIATE THE CONTEXT OF SCARCITY

3 design principles and 15 recommendations for reducing the bandwidth tax and addressing the context of poverty
THE THREE DESIGN PRINCIPLES

Cut the Costs

Create Slack

Reframe and Empower
WIC NATURALLY SUPPORTS FAMILIES LIVING IN CHRONIC SCARCITY…

Families living with many scarce resources need to:

• Figure out which foods are good for a growing child
• Find the money to purchase these healthy items
• Discover (and potential pay for) a trusted source for nutrition and breastfeeding information

WIC provides invaluable support by:

• Reducing the burden of selecting and buying health food
• Providing free expert nutrition and breastfeeding support
• Giving information about and referrals to other local services
BUT MANY ELIGIBLE FAMILIES STILL MISS OUT ON ALL THE BENEFITS WIC HAS TO OFFER

• Fewer than 65% of eligible families access the program
• Many families exit WIC while they are still eligible
• Participants don’t use all the resources WIC offers (like breastfeeding support)

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PHASE 1: UNDERSTANDING WIC THROUGH THE LENS OF BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE

- 3 WIC agencies in San Jose, CA
- Over 60 interviews with staff, current and past participants
- Expert interviews with over a dozen people in government, academia, nutrition and community outreach
- Site visit observations
PHASE 1: UNDERSTANDING WIC THROUGH THE LENS OF BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE

Using Behavioral Science to Improve the WIC Experience

Lessons for the field from San Jose, California

Authors:
Dan Godshalk, Antonio Violante, Anthony Barrows; ideas42
Wendi Goldfinger; Nutrition Policy Institute
May 2017
PHASE 1: RECOMMENDING 40+ DESIGN IDEAS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Baby’s Age</th>
<th>Wet Diapers</th>
<th>Dirty Diapers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Day Old</td>
<td>![Image]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Days Old</td>
<td>![Image]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Days Old</td>
<td>![Image]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Days Old</td>
<td>![Image]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Days Old</td>
<td>![Image]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Days Old</td>
<td>![Image]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Days Old</td>
<td>![Image]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Create Slack
PHASE 2: APPLYING BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE TO PRIORITY ISSUES

Northern California:
Santa Clara County WIC

Southern California:
Watts Healthcare Corporation WIC

Appointment attendance
Retention past first birthday
Breastfeeding continuation
PHASE 2: APPLYING BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE TO PRIORITY ISSUES

Northern California: Santa Clara County WIC

Southern California: Watts Healthcare Corporation WIC

Appointment attendance
Retention past first birthday
Breastfeeding continuation
Now what? ➞

Find appointment details on the back side of this sheet!

Our baby to all
Milestone + Yearly Checkups!

Your WIC Journey
Your family deserves the healthiest start as you welcome a new member!

At WIC, we provide:

- Free sessions with trained nutritionists, registered dietitians, and breastfeeding experts.
- More than $3,000 in nutritious food per child if you are enrolled from the start of your pregnancy until your child turns five (over half of this is in years 2-5)

WIC Appointment Types

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appointment</th>
<th>Brief Description</th>
<th>What should you bring?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nutrition Chat</td>
<td>Expert nutrition tips for you and your growing baby!</td>
<td>Just your WIC folder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pick up your voucher for free healthy food</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breastfeeding Chat</td>
<td>Meet with a WIC breastfeeding expert one on one</td>
<td>Your WIC folder and your baby</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growth Check-in</td>
<td>Find out how your baby is growing!</td>
<td>Your WIC folder and your baby</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pick up your voucher for free healthy food</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birthday Update</td>
<td>Renew your participation in the program for the next year</td>
<td>Your WIC folder and your baby</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pick up your voucher for free healthy food</td>
<td>See checklist below</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What do I need for the Birthday Update?

Most people bring:

- Current Photo ID with Current Address: (as proof of address and identification)
- Medi-Cal Card OR Pay Check Stubs: (as proof of income)
- Health Information:

**Remember to also bring your child!

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

What could you do with the money you’ll save?

Rent: $
Car Payments: $
Savings: ???
Other: 
Clothes: ??

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Ask a WIC staff member if you need an alternative to the documents suggested!

If you forget a document, you will need to return to the WIC office to bring it within the next month.

Avoid this by bringing everything you need the first time!
PHASE 3: HOW WILL WE KNOW IF THESE MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

TESTING
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NEXT STEPS FOR BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE AND WIC

The WIC Shopping Experience

• Adoption and use of EBT

• Easier and more consistent purchase of WIC eligible items

Making Education Stick

• Environment and tools most conducive to learning

• Adoption and use of online or mobile education

Addressing Individual Risk

• Effective and personalized support for those at high risk of early drop out
BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE RESOURCES

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Lessons for the field from San Jose, California

Authors:
Dani Grosky, Antonia Violante, Anthony Barrows, ideas42
World Coster: Nutrition Policy Institute
May 2017
Questions

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