

Developing SIMPLER Solutions

The SIMPLER framework describes behavioral principles applied across the 15 tests in the Behavioral Interventions to Advance Self-Sufficiency (BIAS) project, which was the first major effort to apply behavioral insights to the human services programs that serve poor and vulnerable families in the United States. Each intervention was highly tailored to the particular site's problem and context using a systematic approach called "behavioral diagnosis and design." However, a retrospective look at the tests across BIAS program areas identified common bottlenecks that various human services settings may share and, as a result, commonali-

ties across interventions, even though implementation varied at each site.

SIMPLER was developed to summarize several key behavioral concepts that may be relevant for a variety of programs. In the figure below, each behavioral term is followed by a definition and an example of how this concept was applied in a BIAS site. While SIMPLER is not meant to encompass the full range of available behavioral techniques, practitioners may find it useful as they think about how to apply behavioral insights to their program areas.

S	I	M	P	L	E	R
Social Influence	Implementation Prompt	Making Deadlines	Personalization	Loss Aversion	Ease	Reminder
D E F I N I T I O N S						
The way people perceive themselves in relation to others. Certain identities can be primed based on the desired behavior.	Bridges intention with action. When people feel they have made progress toward their goals, they are more committed to achieving those goals.	Frames a future action as important and urgent, discouraging the tendency to prioritize today's needs over tomorrow's needs.	Encouraging a particular behavior through, for example, a handwritten note or personal assistance, like helping someone complete a form.	Preference for avoiding losses over acquiring gains. Incentives or language can be framed to capitalize on this concept.	Making processes automatic through, for example, defaults, simplification, removing hassles, and color coding.	Prompts to encourage the completion of an action, often in the form of a text message or a postcard.
E X A M P L E S						
Texas mailed to incarcerated parents who owed child support a postcard that included the line, "Other parents have had courts lower their child support."	Indiana prompted parents to develop specific plans to make it to their CCDF renewal appointment on time, with the proper documents.	Paycheck Plus advertised an artificially early deadline to attend a meeting, knowing that people who missed the first due date would have time to catch up before the real deadline.	Oklahoma mailed lists of clients due for renewal to child care staff members and asked providers to communicate with parents to assist them with renewing their CCDF voucher.	Los Angeles designed two notices, one emphasizing benefits to participants for attending an appointment, and the other emphasizing losses they might incur by not attending.	Washington made the child support modification process easier by mailing materials to parents before they even asked that included a tip sheet specifying which questions in the application had to be answered.	Ohio sent a monthly reminder through mail, robocall, or text message to parents who owed child support but were not getting any other monthly invoice to remind them to pay.

FOR MORE DETAILS, SEE THE FINAL REPORT OF THE BIAS PROJECT:

Nudging Change in Human Services: Final Report of the Behavioral Interventions to Advance Self-Sufficiency (BIAS) Project