

BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE & WIC: SMALL TWEAKS TO MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE

Julie Chambers, Senior Associate

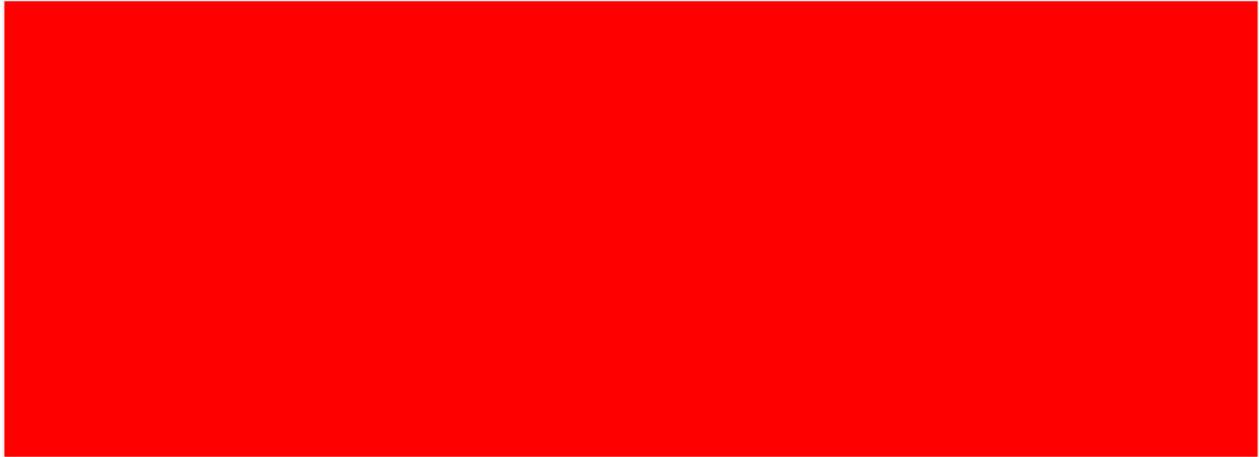
Dani Grodsky, Senior Associate

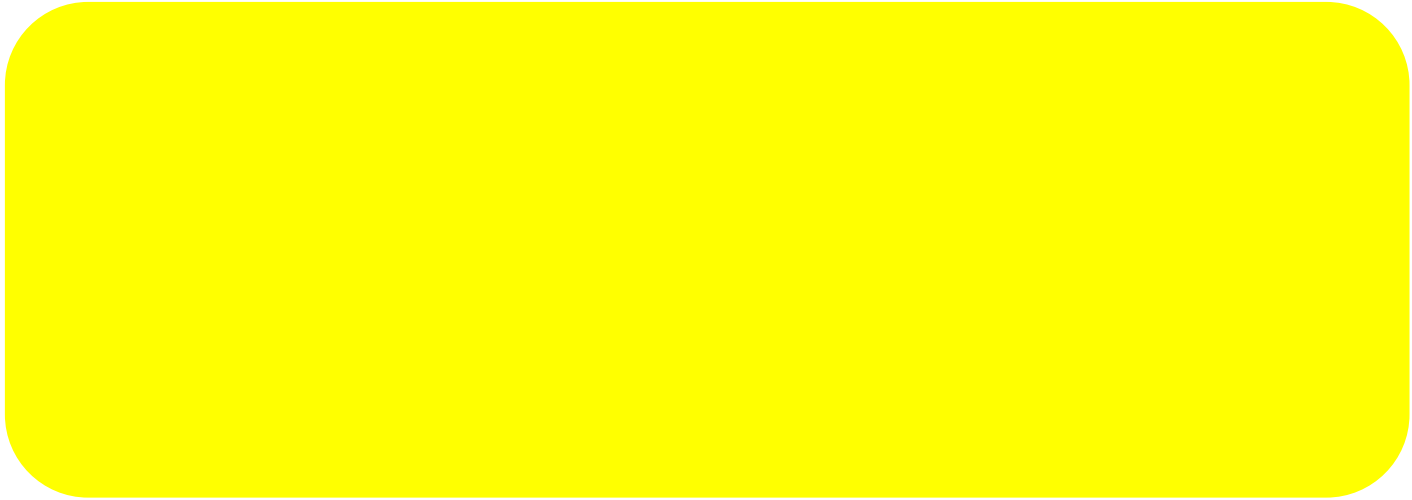
Tuesday, August 1st, 2017

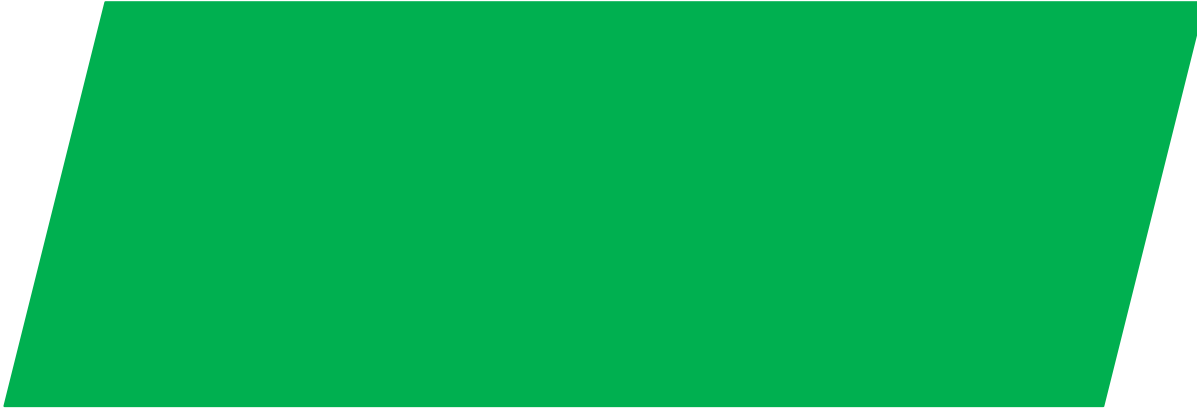
LET'S START WITH A GAME...

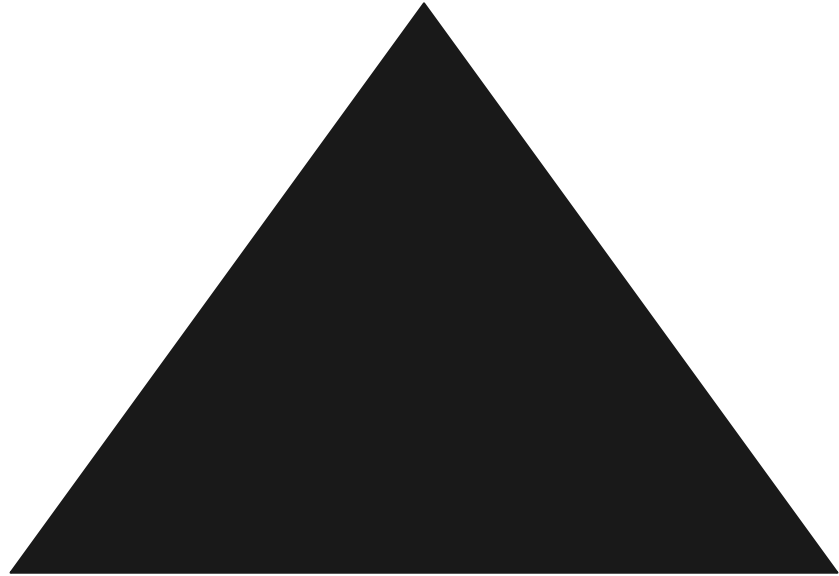
EXPLAIN WITH A GAME...

Say out loud the color of the shape you see on the screen.









BLUE

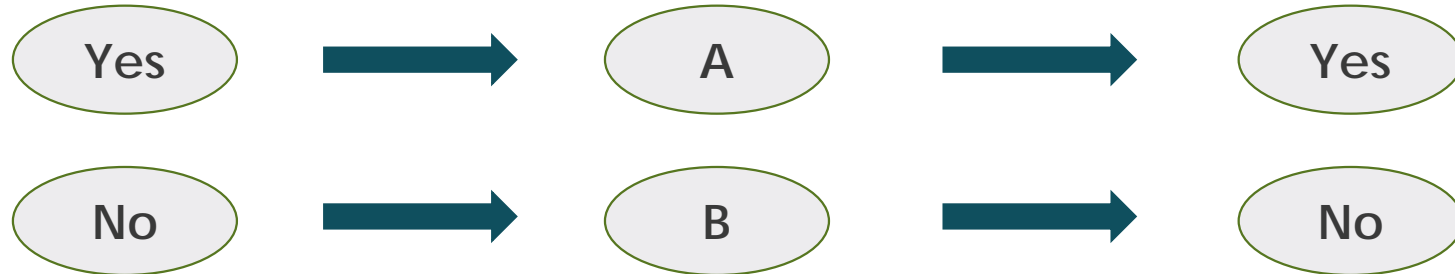
STANDARD DECISION MAKING MODEL



Do I want outcome X?

What action must I take?

Outcome X occurs or not.



BEHAVIORAL DECISION MAKING MODEL

Decision

Action

Outcome

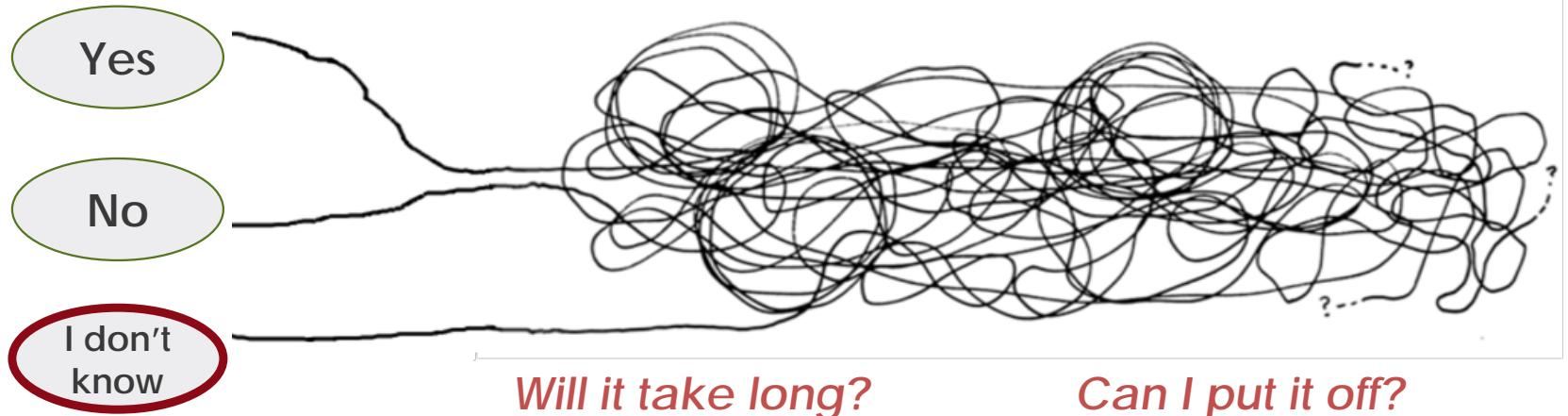
Do I want outcome X?

What action must I take?

Outcome X occurs or not.

How hard is it?

Am I in the mood?



ideas⁴²

A nonprofit that uses the theories of **behavioral science** and psychology to **design solutions** to some of the world's most **persistent social problems**.

SPECIAL SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION PROGRAM FOR WOMEN, INFANTS AND CHILDREN (WIC)

Serves about **8 million low-income people** per month nationwide, including:

- ❖ pregnant women
- ❖ postpartum mothers
- ❖ children up to age five
- ❖ fathers, grandparents and foster parents raising children under 5

Provides a variety of free benefits including:

- ❖ healthy food packages
- ❖ one-on-one, group and online breastfeeding and nutrition counseling
- ❖ referrals for other helpful programs

POVERTY IS ESPECIALLY DANGEROUS FOR CHILDREN AND WIC HAS BEEN PROVEN TO HELP

13 million children in America live in food-insecure households, which is associated with:

- ❖ lack of important nutrients
- ❖ cognitive development deficits
- ❖ behavioral problems
- ❖ poor health



- ❖ Healthier birth weight
- ❖ Better educational outcomes
- ❖ Improved access to healthcare
- ❖ Increased consumption of healthy foods

Carlson, Steven & Neuberger, Zoe. (2017) WIC Works: Addressing the Nutrition and Health Needs of Low-Income Families. *Center on Budget and Policy Priorities*. Retrieved from <http://www.cbpp.org/research/food-assistance/wic-works-addressing-the-nutrition-and-health-needs-of-low-income-families>

BUT, BEHAVIORAL BARRIERS ARE PREVENTING EVEN GREATER IMPACT...

Enrollment:

- ❖ Of the **14 million people** eligible for WIC each month, **less than two-thirds** access the program.

Voucher Use:

- ❖ **Fewer than 50%** of WIC families with fully breastfed infants redeemed all the food items available to them.

Drop out:

- ❖ **More than 20%** of eligible participants exit WIC when their child turns one

USDA Food and Nutrition Service (2015) Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Eligibles and Coverage-2012: National and State-Level Estimates Summary.

Gleason, S., Pooler, J. (2011) The Effects of Changes in WIC Food Packages on Redemptions, Contractor and Cooperator: Report No. 69. *Altarum Institute*.

A Program Logistics



Enrollment



Appointment attendance

B Building Nutrition & Knowledge Intentions



Education Engagement



Setting Breastfeeding Intentions

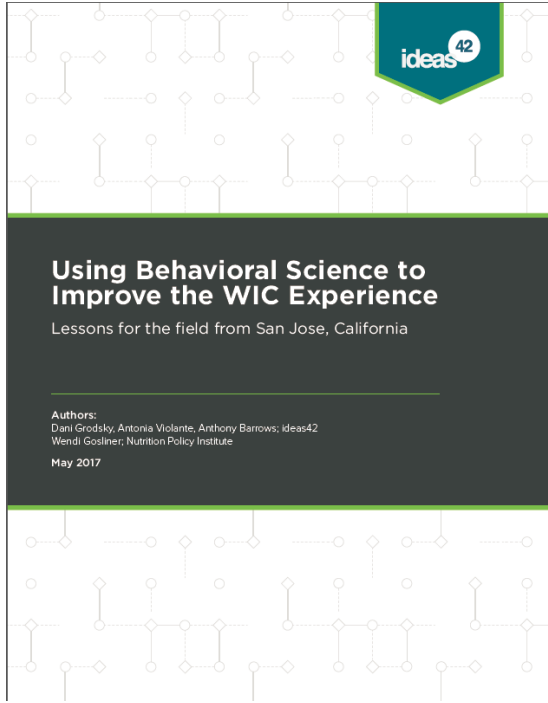
C Follow Through of Health-Promoting Behaviors



Breastfeeding Continuation



Shopping Experience



D Exiting the WIC Program



Early Dropout

OUR WORK WITH CALIFORNIA WIC

the David &
Lucile Packard
FOUNDATION



- 3 WIC agencies in San Jose, CA
- Expert interviews with over a dozen people in government, academia, nutrition and community outreach
- Over 60 interviews with staff, current and past participants
- Site visit observations

BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE AND THE CONTEXT OF POVERTY

Behavioral science research

+

40+ human service organizations
and researchers

+

25 individuals living in poverty

3 design principals

and

15 recommendations

for better supporting those in the
context of poverty

Poverty Interrupted

Applying Behavioral Science to
the Context of Chronic Scarcity

ideas⁴²



WHAT IS SCARCITY?



- Scarcity of any resource (e.g. *time, money, food*) takes up mental capacity and causes “tunneling” of the mind



- This can be adaptive in the short term



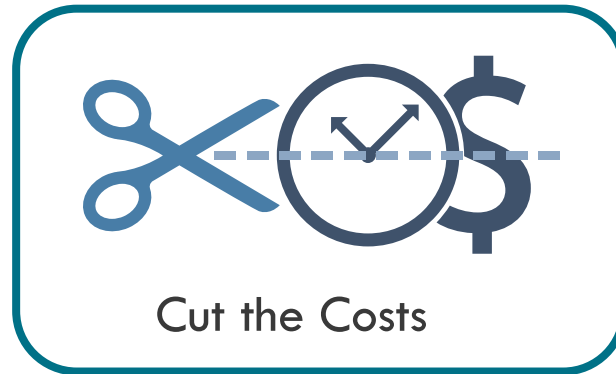
- But dangerous when chronic

POVERTY \neq PERSONAL FAILING

POVERTY \neq CULTURAL PATHOLOGY

POVERTY $=$ CHRONIC SCARCITY

APPLYING THE POVERTY INTERRUPTED PRINCIPALS TO WIC



MAKING EDUCATION STICK



Cut the Costs: Make Communications Clear and Actionable

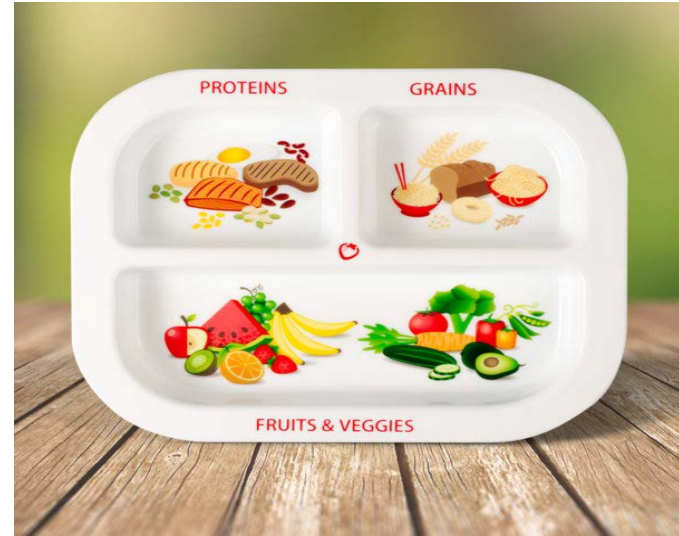


MAKING EDUCATION STICK



Cut the Costs: Make Communications Clear and Actionable

Baby's Age	Wet Diapers	Dirty Diapers
1 Day Old		
2 Days Old		
3 Days Old		
4 Days Old		
5 Days Old		
6 Days Old		
7 Days Old		



NEXT STEPS IN OUR WIC WORK

2017

- Partnering with two WIC agencies in Northern and Southern CA
- Co-design of 2 behaviorally-informed solutions

2018

- Potential for full implementation and testing

Opportunity for partnership, continued research and insight sharing nationally

LEARN MORE

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FOLLOW: [@ideas42](#)

READ: Behavioral Science in WIC White Paper
Poverty Interrupted White Paper


APPENDIX

SUPPORTING COMPLEX DECISIONS



Cut the Costs: Increase Accessibility

INDIVIDUAL NO.	PARTICIPANT / PARENT / GUARDIAN	FIRST DAY TO USE	LAST DAY TO USE	SERIAL NO.
		JULY 11 11	AUG 10 11	418545189


FOOD ITEM NUMBER: 6000
 Pay to the order of: WIC Authorized Vendor

What to buy: USE JULY 5, 2011 WAFL SHOPPING GUIDE
 1 (GALLON) MILK, WHOLE
 1 (16 OZ) WHOLE GRAINS
 36 OZ BREAKFAST CEREAL

EXACT PURCHASE PRICE:
MUST NOT EXCEED MAXIMUM ALLOWABLE DEPARTMENT REIMBURSEMENT RATE
 FOOD ITEM NUMBER
6000

State of California WIC Program
 VOID IF NOT DEPOSITED WITHIN 45 DAYS OF
 FIRST DAY TO USE. NOT VALID IF ALTERED.

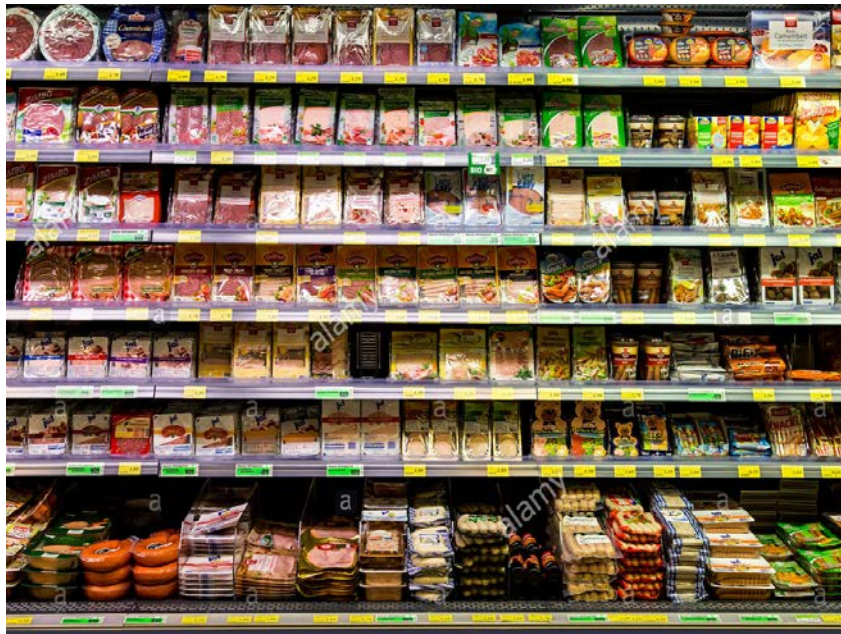
VALID ONLY FOR FOOD ITEMS SPECIFIED IN THE
 CALIFORNIA WIC AUTHORIZED FOOD LIST.

AUTHORIZED SIGNATURE (SIGN AT PURCHASE)

SUPPORTING COMPLEX DECISIONS



Cut the Costs: Increase Accessibility



QUANTIFYING THE BANDWIDTH TAX



