UBC Briefing 6: NEAR-AFAR as a way of implementing the Behaviour Change Wheel

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Many people working with the Behavioural Insight Team and the UK government use the MINDSPACE and/or EAST frameworks when developing behaviour change interventions.

MINDSPACE refers to generalisations about human behaviour, cognition or emotion that intervention designers can use to make their interventions more effective.

EAST refers to features of the target behaviour that may make it more likely to be enacted, or the intervention that make it more likely to be effective.

The attraction of these frameworks is that they are intuitive and easy to understand. The disadvantage is that they represent just some of the possible approaches and do not link to a coherent model of behaviour change (see UBC Briefings 1, 2, and 3).

COM-B provides a coherent model of behaviour change and the Behaviour Change Wheel (BCW) provides a comprehensive framework for intervention development. However, these are quite complex.

We have devised a simple mnemonic that intervention designers may wish to use when developing behaviour change interventions using COM-B and the BCW. The acronym is NEAR-AFAR.

To get people to do things, make them: Normal, Easy, Attractive and/or Routine.

To stop people doing things, make them: Abnormal, Fraught, Aversive and Reflective.

The table below shows how these terms link to COM-B and the BCW.

Normal: We are more likely to do things that we see being done by people with whom we identify	Target social opportunity through the intervention functions of modelling and environmental restructuring
Easy: We are more likely to do things if they are simple, within our capabilities and require little by way of resources, time or effort	Target capability and opportunity through the intervention functions of education, training, restriction, enablement and environmental restructuring
Attractive: We are more likely to do things if we think they will be enjoyable, serve a purpose or avoid something bad happening	Target motivation through the intervention functions of education, persuasion, incentivisation and coercion
Routine: We are more likely to do things if they are part of our routine so we don't have to think about them	Target automatic motivation through the intervention functions of training and environmental restructuring
Abnormal: We are less likely to do things if they are not seen as part of normal behaviour or no-one with whom we identify is doing them	Target social opportunity through environmental restructuring
Fraught: We are less likely to do things if we don't have the capability or confidence or if barriers are put in the way	Target capability and opportunity through the intervention functions of restriction and environmental restructuring
Aversive: We are less likely to do things that we expect to be unpleasant, or lead to outcomes that we don't like	Target motivation through the intervention functions of education, persuasion and coercion
Reflective: We are less likely to follow habitual behaviour patterns if we can be led to stop and think to disrupt the routine or automatic flow of behaviour	Target reflective motivation through the intervention functions of education and persuasion, and automatic motivation through training and environmental restructuring