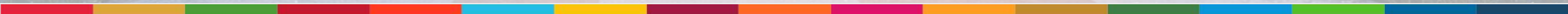




Behavioural science for career development - evidence-based steps for action

By Dr Tiina Likki & Tina Stochmal
World Health Organization



Today's presenters



Tiina Likki, PhD

Technical Lead, Transformation
World Health Organization



Tina Stochmal

HR Officer
World Health Organization

Zoom Support Team



Preeti Nautiyal

HR officer (Global Sourcing & Recruitment)

World Health Organization

House Keeping Rules

You are muted by default. The chat function is disabled.

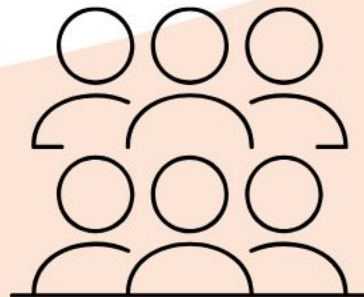
If you have any questions, please submit them through **Zoom Q&A button**.

The session will be **recorded**. The recording and presentation will be available on: [Inter-Agency Career Week 2026 webpage](#)



Due to the large number of participants in this session, we might not be able to respond to all of your questions.

Thank you for you understanding.



Welcome and objectives

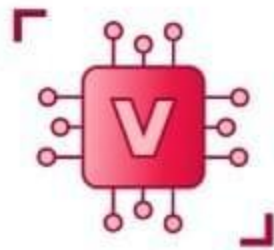
Our goal today is to provide an **introduction** to relevant concepts so you can start your journey on **using behavioral science** as an **enabler** for achieving **professional and personal goals**.



UN 2.0
Quintet
of Change



DATA



DIGITAL



INNOVATION



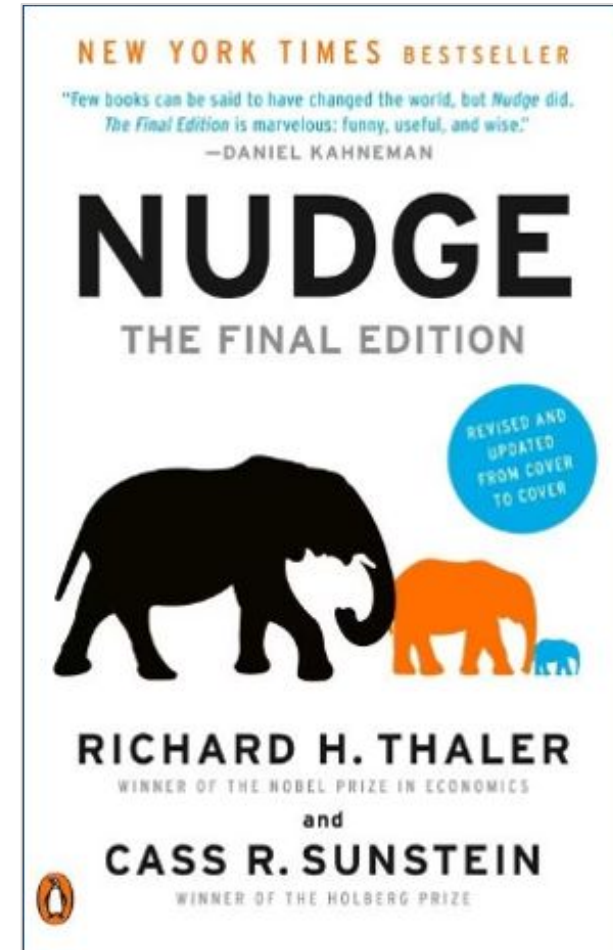
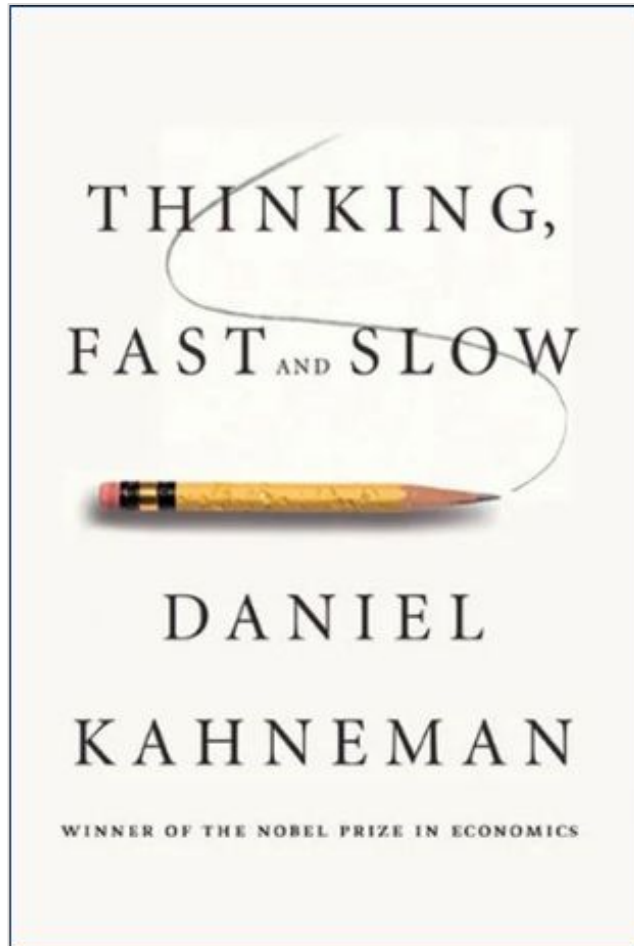
FORESIGHT



BEHAVIOURAL
SCIENCE



FORWARD-THINKING CULTURE



Imagine our brain as two systems (dual-process model)

System 1



Travel to work
Understand simple sentences
Do easy math (2x5)

Fast

Automatic
Effortless
Subconscious
Generates associations
Error-prone, uses biases and heuristics (mental shortcuts)

System 2

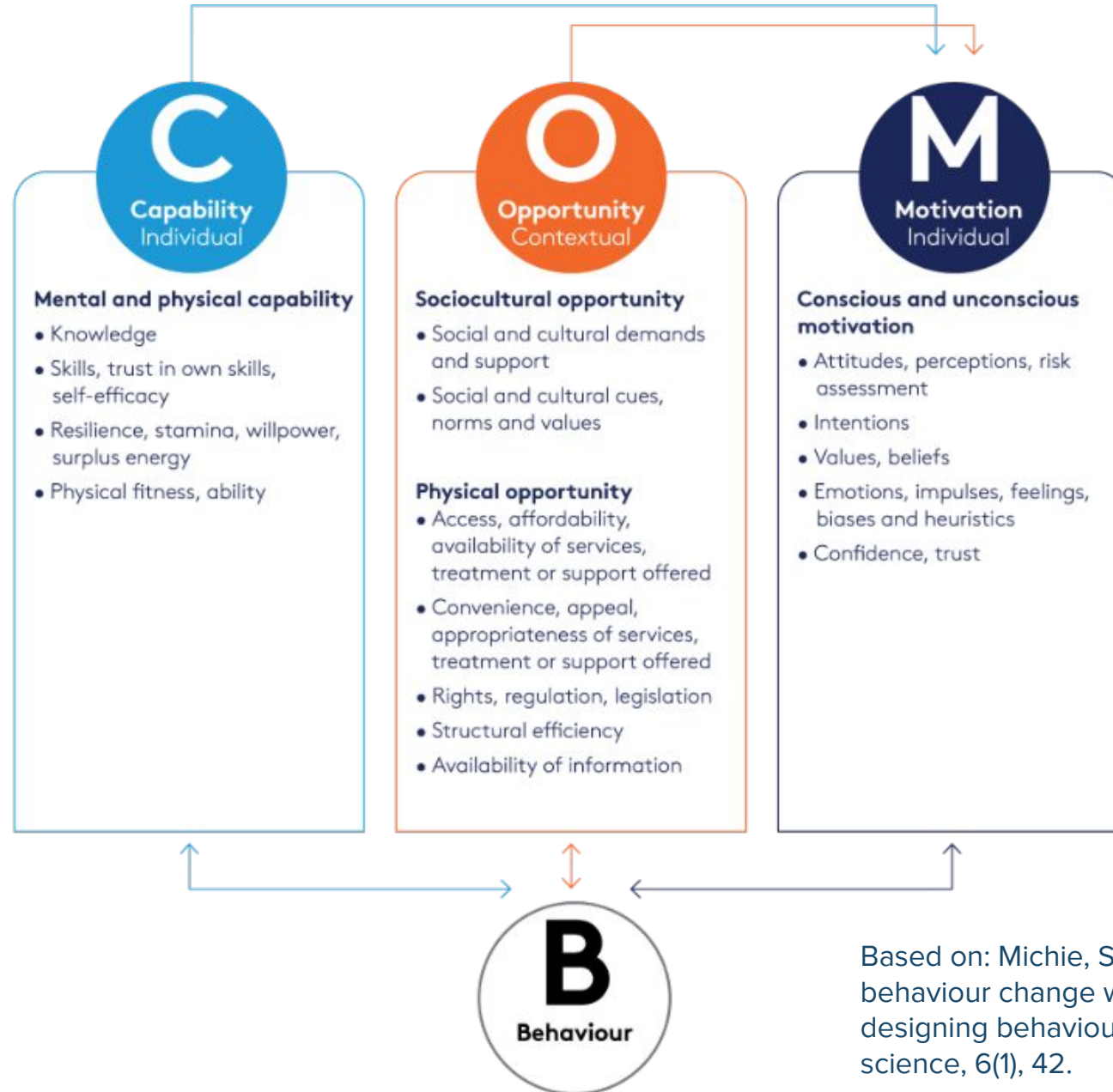


Travel to a new city
Understand complex logical arguments
Do difficult math (16x8x22)

Slow

Effortful
Conscious
Can perform complex computations
Less error-prone

COM-B tool



Based on: Michie, S., Van Stralen, M. M., & West, R. (2011). The behaviour change wheel: a new method for characterising and designing behaviour change interventions. *Implementation science*, 6(1), 42.

Let's do an exercise

1

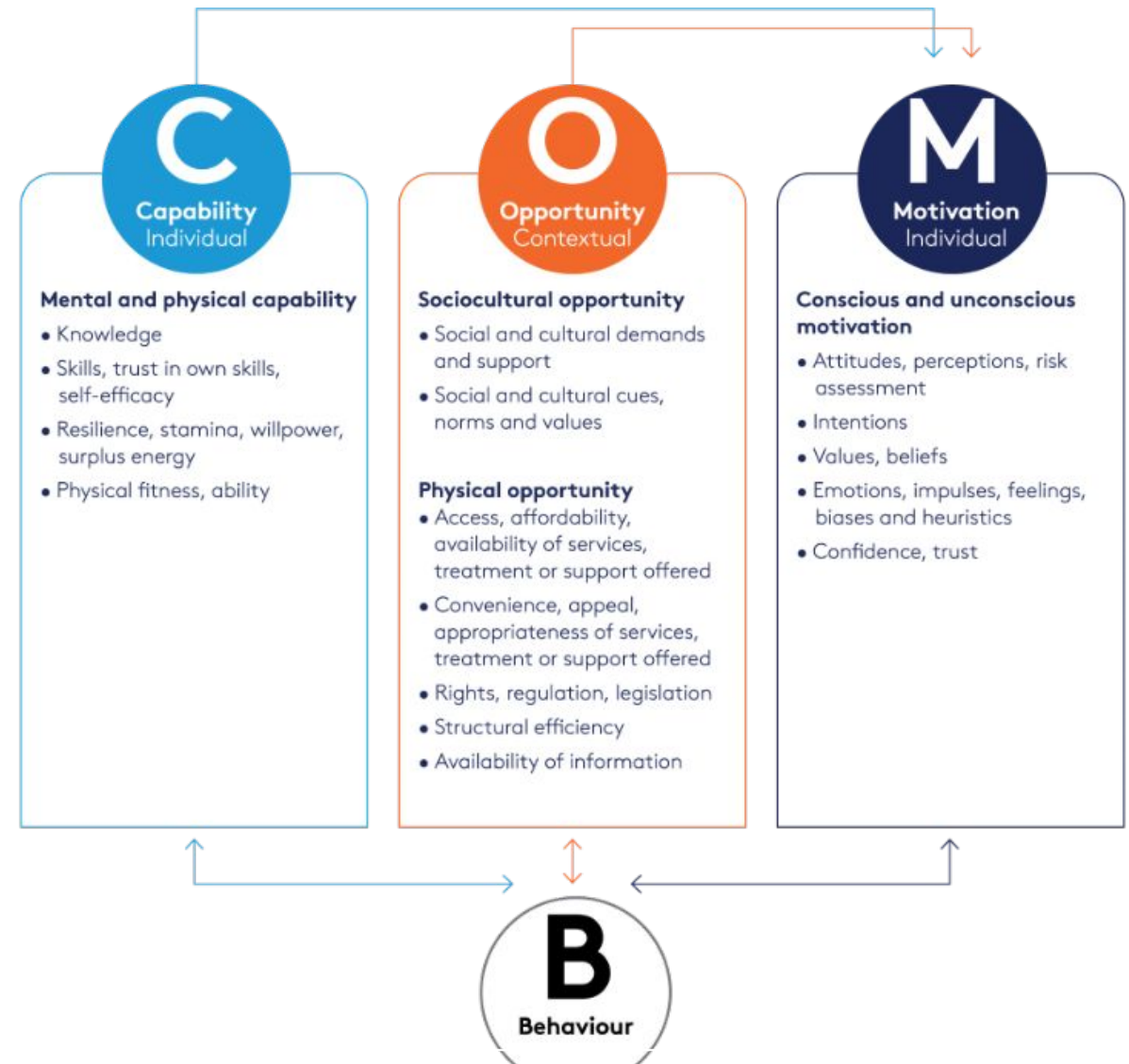
Choose a behaviour or a goal that you've tried to achieve recently, or would like to achieve

2

Take 2 minutes to think about what stands in the way – capability, physical opportunity, social opportunity or motivation

2

Take 2 minutes to think about what stands in the way – capability, physical opportunity, social opportunity or motivation



Based on: Michie, S., Van Stralen, M. M., & West, R. (2011). The behaviour change wheel: a new method for characterising and designing behaviour change interventions. *Implementation science*, 6(1), 42.

Now – pop in the Q&A

1

Your desired behaviour or goal (if you feel comfortable sharing it)

2

What category your most important barriers belongs to: capability, physical opportunity, social opportunity or motivation

Introducing EAST



EAST: easy

Reduce friction, remove effort

Simplify or automate

Create a supportive context

Career Challenge: People *intend* to apply, network, or update their profile

Shift to:

- Instead of: “Update your CV”
→ “Spend 15 minutes adding 2 measurable achievements to your CV today”
- “Network more” → *ignored for 6 months*
→ *Instead: “Send one ‘Hey, how are you?’ message every Tuesday”*



EAST: attractive

Attract attention

Create smart incentives

Make progress visible

Career challenge: Applications feel repetitive and unrewarding.

Shift to:

- **Reframe:** From “Apply for jobs” to “Position yourself for roles that shape global impact”
- **Rewards:** Reward yourself!
- Turn applications into a **personal brand exercise**, not admin work



EAST: social

Leverage social networks and social support

Make commitments

Career challenge: New skills are often built in isolation, even though career progression depends on learning from others

Shift to:

- **Encourage:** Learning with peers, not just courses. Asking others: “What skills helped you move forward?”
- **Showcase real progression paths:** “I didn’t have the skill - I learned it and applied again”



EAST: timely

Choose the right moment for action

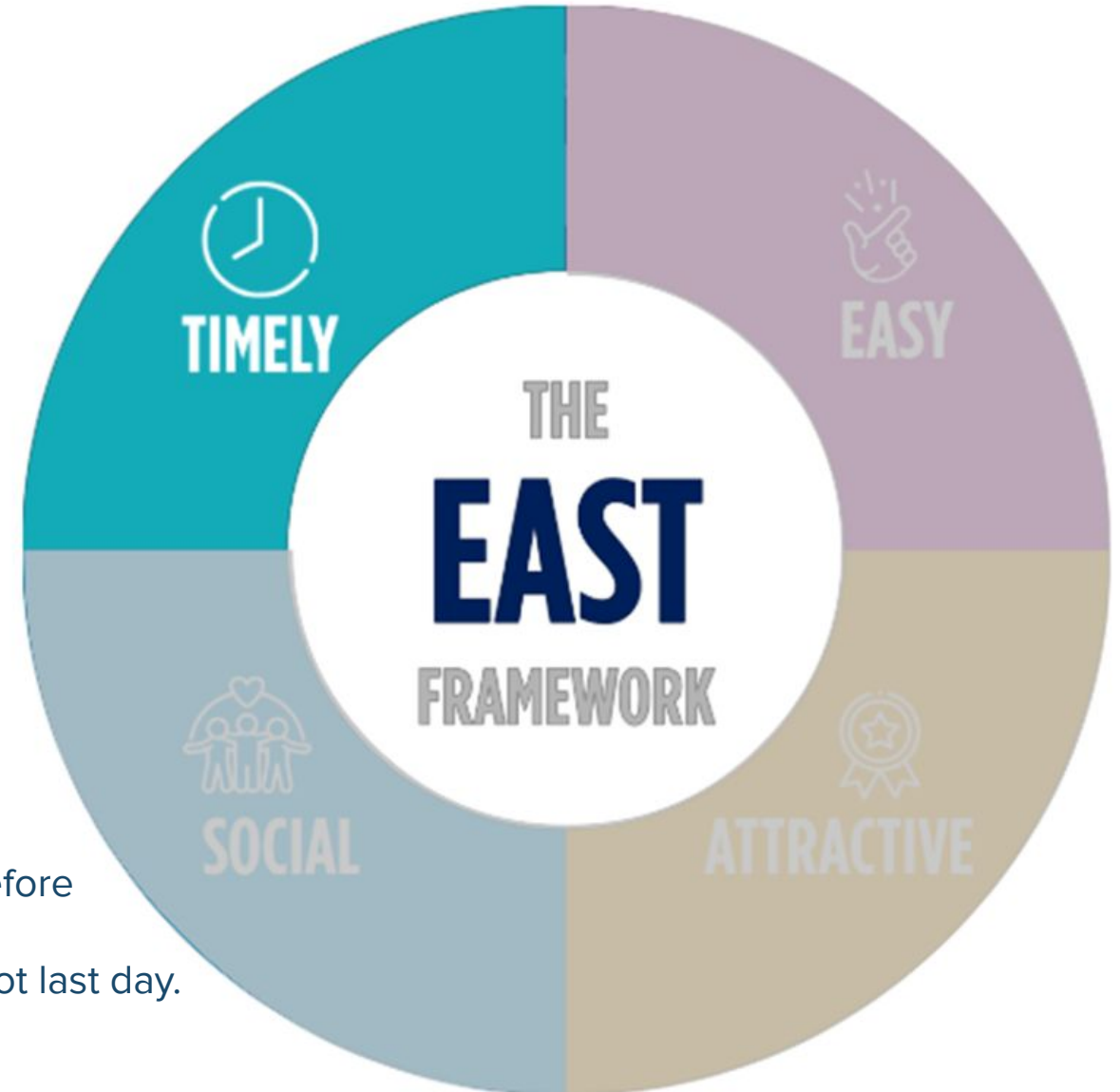
Time your reminders

Plan effectively

Career challenge: People wait for the “perfect time” and miss opportunities

Shift to:

- Encourage action right after:
 - A performance review → update CV
 - A project completion → document achievements
 - You got good feedback? → Use it immediately (Before imposter syndrome returns from vacation)
- Use deadlines effectively: Apply well before closing, not last day.
- Use moments of change: pause, reflect and act.



Recommended read!



The Intention-Behavior Gap



Difference between what people say they plan to do (their intentions) and what they actually do (their behaviors).

Intention-Behavior Gap

4%

AIHR reports online corporate course completion rates as low as 4%; some programs reach 72% with blended learning. Example: Only 5% (50/1,000 enrollees) complete full courses in low-engagement scenarios.



Intention-Behavior Gap

95%

Application of new skills on the job

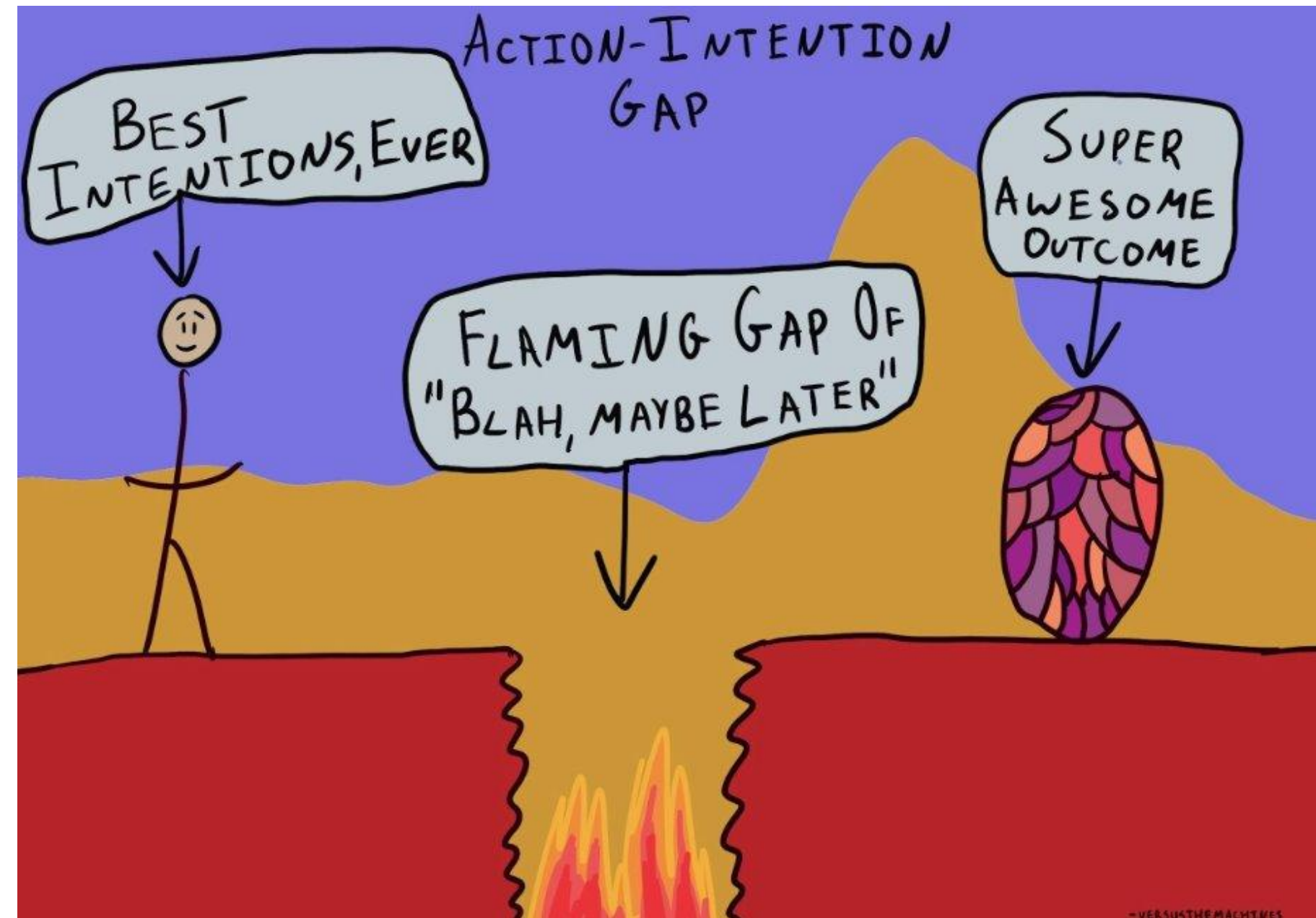
Approximately 95% of employees report intention to master role-specific skills via training, but only 9.3% complete training and apply on the job due to irrelevant content not mirroring real workflow or goals.



Intention-Behavior Gap

Where have you noticed the intention-behaviour gap in your own life?

Pop it in the Q&A



How to overcome intention-behaviour gaps?

Make a plan (implementation intentions)

33.1%

Control Condition

[Company Name] IS HOLDING A FREE FLU SHOT CLINIC.


Flu shots will be available on site at the [location of relevant free flu shot clinic] at the following times:

Monday, October 26th	7:00 am – 3:30 pm
Wednesday, October 28th	7:00 am – 3:30 pm
Friday, October 30th	7:00 am – 3:30 pm
Tuesday, November 3rd	7:00 am – 3:30 pm
Thursday, November 5th	7:00 am – 3:30 pm

37.1%

Time Plan Condition

[Company Name] IS HOLDING A FREE FLU SHOT CLINIC.

 Many people find it helpful to **make a plan** for getting their shot. You can write yours here:

, at

(day of the week) (month) (day) (time)

Flu shots will be available on site at the [location of relevant free flu shot clinic] at the following times:

Monday, October 26th	7:00 am – 3:30 pm
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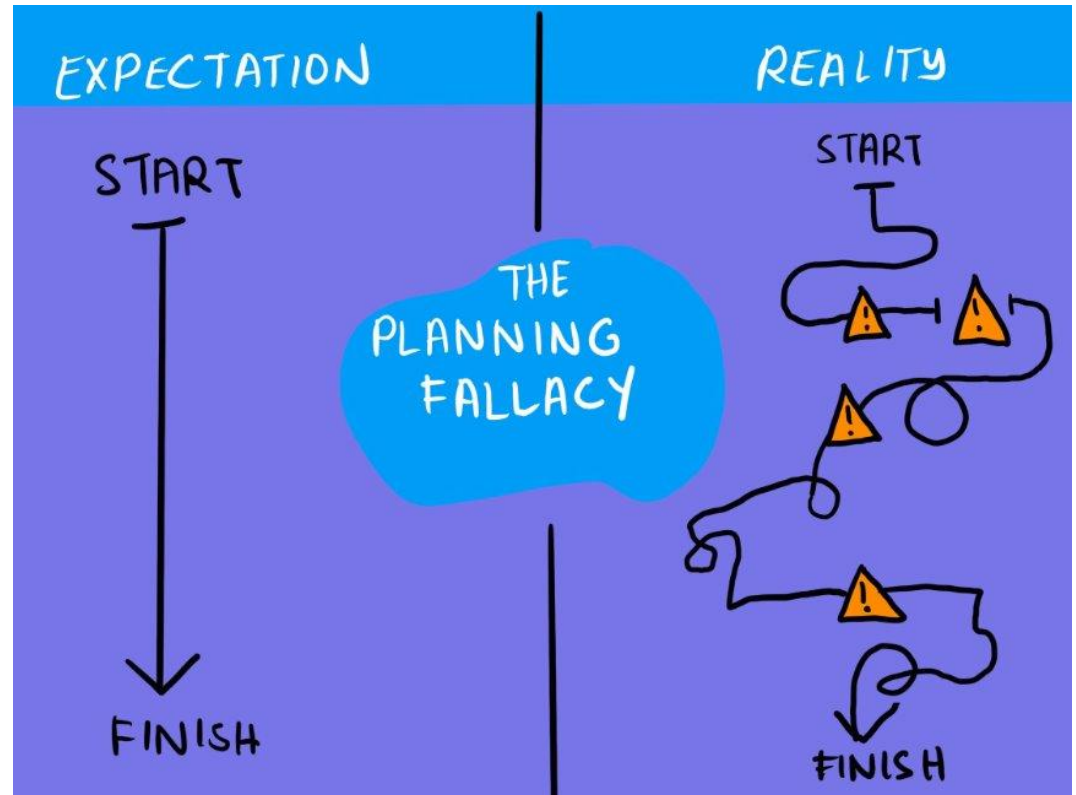
Milkman, K. L., Beshears, J., Choi, J. J., Laibson, D., & Madrian, B. C. (2011). Using implementation intentions prompts to enhance influenza vaccination rates. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 108(26), 10415-10420.

Planning fallacy

Tendency to be too optimistic when planning (underestimating time, effort, costs and obstacles)

Driven by various factors

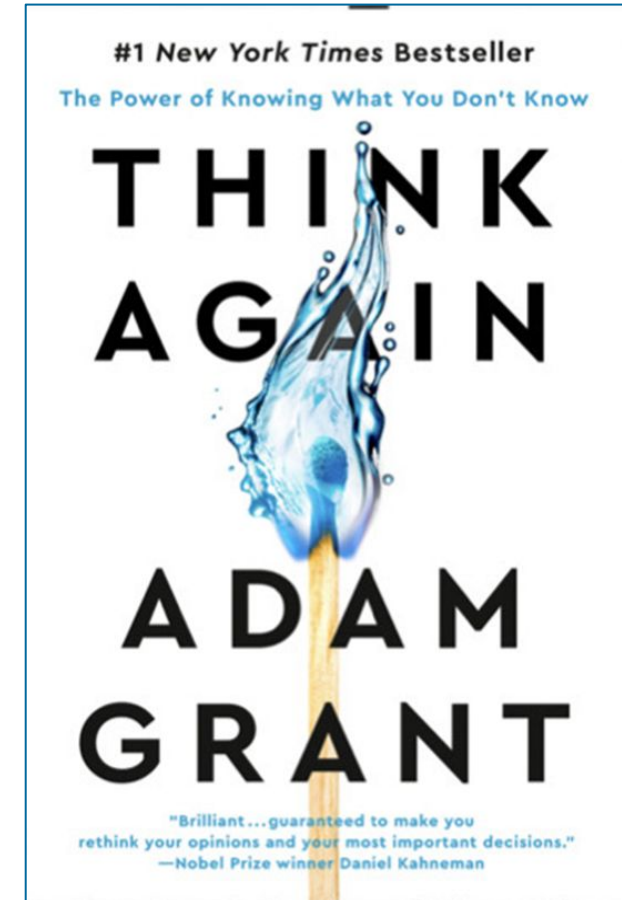
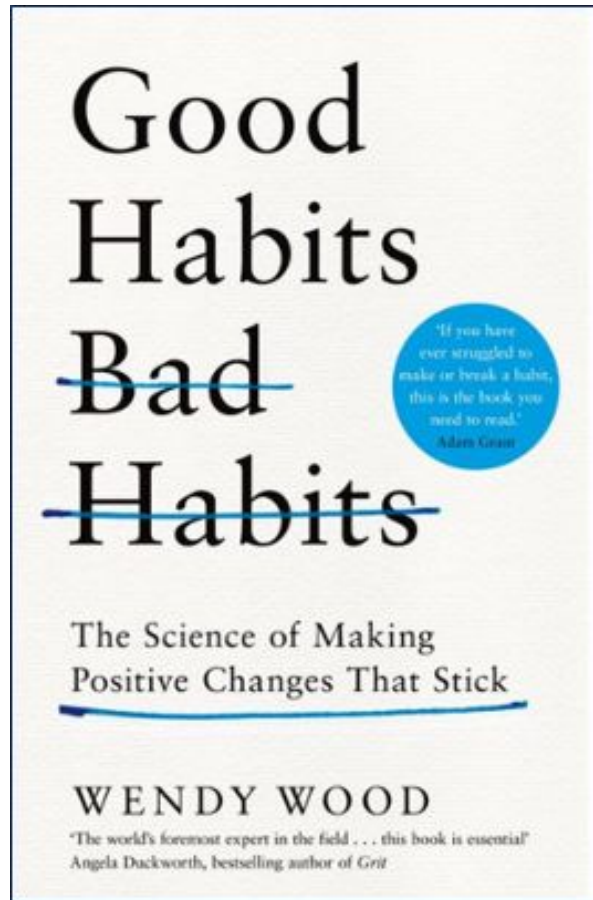
- taking on too many goals or roles
- insufficient contingency planning
- discounting external factors



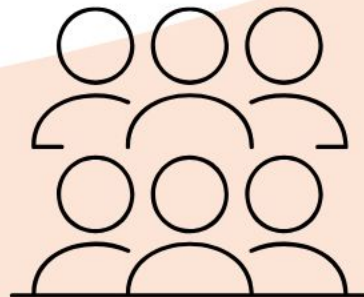
Take aways

1. Willpower is overrated – context matters
2. Be specific about your goal, and the behaviours needed to achieve it
3. Use COM-B to understand what stands in the way
4. Make it Easy, Attractive, Social and Timely
5. Plan but avoid the planning fallacy!

Further reading



Q&A



Inter- Agency Career Week 2026 Agenda

04 - 08 May

	Monday, 04 May	Tuesday, 05 May	Wednesday, 06 May	Thursday, 07 May	Friday, 08 May
03:00-04:00 (New York) 09:00-10:00 (Europe) 10:00-11:00 (Nairobi) 14:00-15:00 (Bangkok)	Pres (E) - From the UN to the Private Sector: Skills that enable Career Transition	Pres (E) Thriving in Uncertainty	Pres (E) - Career Trend Coaching: Preparing for What's Next	Pres (E) - Habits under Pressure: working more intentionally	Pres (E) Behavioural Science for Career Development: Evidence-Based Steps for Action
04:30-05:30 (New York) 10:30-11:30 (Europe) 11:30-12:30 (Nairobi) 15:30-16:30 (Bangkok)	PD (E) - Inside the Recruiter's Mind: How Hiring Really Works in the UN and Beyond	Pres (E) - From Sat Nav to Compass: Navigating Your Career in a Changing UN System	Pres (E) - Upskilling for the Future: How to Stay Marketable Inside and Beyond the UN	Pres (E) - Becoming a UN Volunteer; What is in it for you? The Hidden Benefits of Volunteering.	PD (E) - Beyond the UN Blue: Navigating Your Career Transition to Other IGOs
06:00-07:00 (New York) 12:00-13:00 (Europe) 13:00-14:00 (Nairobi) 17:00-18:00 (Bangkok)	PD (E) - Talent on the Move: Growing your career through mobility	Clinic (F) - Recherche d'emploi optimisée par l'IA : éthique, sécurisée et tournée vers l'avenir	Clinic (E) - AI for Your Career: Practical Tools and Prompts for Career Management	Pres (E) - Leading from Within	Pres (F) - Réussir les entretiens basés sur les compétences : un guide avec des conseils pratiques pour se préparer
07:30-08:30 (New York) 13:30-14:30 (Europe) 14:30-15:30 (Nairobi) 18:30-19:30 (Bangkok)	Clinic (E) - Mapping Your Motivators for Career Choices	Pres (E) - Mapping Professional Achievements to Job Application and Interview	Pres (E) - Breaking Down Job Descriptions	Pres (E) - What remains when everything changes: A Counselling Framework for global nomad staff facing adversity and transition	Pres (E) - The skills shift: What skills-based hiring and AI agents might mean for a UN career
09:00-10:00 (New York) 15:00-16:00 (Europe) 16:00-17:00 (Nairobi) 20:00-21:00 (Bangkok)	Pres (E) - Your Career, Your Conversation	Pres (E) - Strengthening Your Adaptability Muscles - AQ: The Adaptability Quotient	Pres (E) - Managing Your Saboteurs: Removing Barriers to Your Career Growth	Pres (E) - Use Your Strengths to Boost Your Career	Pres (E) - Activating Inner Resources in Uncertain Times
10:30-11:30 (New York) 16:30-17:30 (Europe) 17:30-18:30 (Nairobi) 21:30-22:30 (Bangkok)	Pres (E) - A Mind-Blowing Tour of AI Tools to Accelerate Your Career	Pres (E) - From Sat Nav to Compass: Navigating Your Career in a Changing UN System	Pres (S) - Construye tu Asistente de Carrera con IA	Pres (E) - Building a winning profile from application to interview	Pres (E) - Mentoring 2.0: From Top-Down to All-Around
13:00-14:00 (New York) 19:00-20:00 (Europe) 20:00-21:00 (Nairobi) 00:00-01:00 ⁻¹ (Bangkok)	Pres (F) - Opportunités de carrière aux Nations Unies pour les jeunes professionnels et conseils pour réussir sa candidature.	PD (E) - Thriving Globally - The human side of relocation	Pres (E) - Career Development: How you can turn a Psychosocial Hazard into a Thriving Strategy	Pres (E) - Youth Engagement: Put in Practice! (Young Talents in the UN System)	Pres (E) - Working for Justice
14:30-15:30 (New York) 20:30-21:30 (Europe) 21:30-22:30 (Nairobi) 01:30 ⁻¹ -02:30 ⁻¹ (Bangkok)	Pres (E) - Navigating Competency-Based Interviews: A Practical Preparation Guide	Pres (S) - Entrevistas basadas en competencias: guía práctica de preparación	Clinic (S) - Desarrollo de habilidades y redes profesionales a través de la mentoría		



THANK YOU!

The presentation, recording and other resources will be shared on our dedicated [Inter-Agency Career Week Page](#).

Please fill out the [Evaluation Survey](#). Your feedback matters to us!

IACW 2026 Behavioural Science for Career Development: Evidence-Based Steps for Action

