



3.4

Behavioral Strategies

Tip Sheet



3.4 BEHAVIORAL STRATEGIES TIP SHEET

Use this tip sheet to address common engagement challenges caused by “behavioral bottlenecks,” which are barriers related to decision-making and action. This sheet includes seven bottlenecks to attending the first session and offers examples of solutions informed by behavioral science that can help remove the bottlenecks and shift participants’ behavior.

WHAT IS A NUDGE?

A nudge is a simple way to influence someone’s behavior predictably without taking away any of the person’s options. When a behavioral bottleneck makes it challenging for a person to complete an action, a well-designed nudge is one available tool to prompt that person to overcome that challenge. It is clear that fathers who have enrolled in the new service would like to participate, and nudges make it easier for them to achieve their goals. It all starts with session 1.

Use Nudges to Address These Seven “Bottlenecks” to Attending the First Session

BOTTLENECK	NUDGE
<p>FORGETFULNESS</p> <p>People are good at making plans, but it is hard to remember to do what you planned at the right time.</p>	<p>Send a final reminder very close to the time when the father would need to leave for his session. This time could be one to two hours before. Or, if you schedule session 1 with the father in person, help him set an alarm on his phone for an hour before the session.</p>
<hr/> <p>PROCRASTINATION</p> <p>People may put off an action over and over, sometimes failing to do it at all.</p>	<p>Set a deadline for when the father must complete session 1 and remind him how much time he has to complete that first session.</p>

BOTTLENECK**NUDGE****LOSS AVERSION**

People are more sensitive to losing something than they are to gaining something equivalent. For example, people are happier *not to lose* \$5 than they are to gain \$5.

In a reminder message, **frame session 1 as an opportunity** that you do not want the father to lose. Try: “Let’s get you in this week. Don’t lose your spot!” Or, “Don’t miss your chance!” You can also refer to losing the incentive: “Don’t lose your \$25 gift card!”

LIMITED ATTENTION

People can only pay attention to a certain amount of information at a given moment. If they are overwhelmed, their ability to process or act on the information may decline.

Simplify session 1 reminders to contain only essential information: date, time, location.

CHOICE OVERLOAD

When there are too many choices, people can become overwhelmed and choose poorly or make no choice at all.

If a father misses session 1, **give him two choices** for rescheduling based on what you already know about his availability. Try: “How about next Monday or Tuesday at 1 p.m.?”

SOCIAL INFLUENCE

People often act based on how their peers act. For example, if everyone in your office recycles, you will probably recycle, too.

If a father misses session 1, **let him know how other participants have benefited** from attending that session. Try: “Let’s reschedule! Other participants have found that session 1 reminded them how easy it was to try this new thing.” Remind him, positively, of his connection to the group.

NEGATIVE IDENTITY

Negative self-images can perpetuate behavior that fits that image. If you think that you are not a good student, you may actually do less to improve.

Activate participants’ positive self-images by **emphasizing the progress they have made** so far and **reinforcing their identity within a group**. For example, activate the “father” identity for men attending parenting classes. Try: “You have already taken a great first step as a father and provider by signing up for the service. You’re ready for your first session.”