



Behavior-Centered Design

AN OVERVIEW



CENTER FOR
BEHAVIOR & THE
ENVIRONMENT

rare



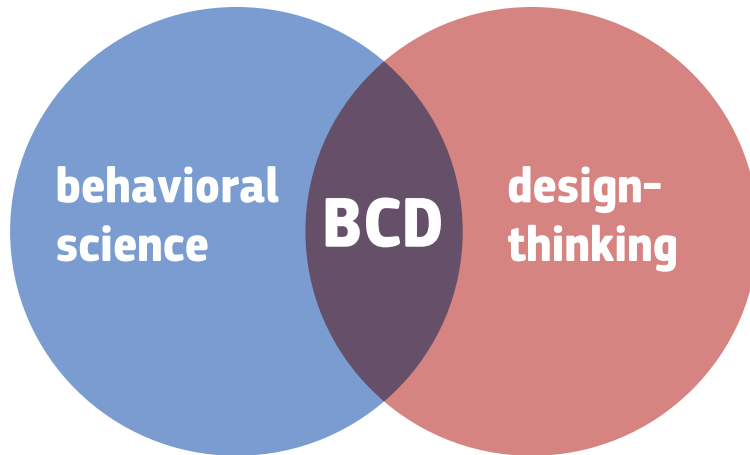
WELCOME!

Welcome to Rare's Behavior-Centered Design (BCD) guide for environmental practitioners. We believe that to achieve desired results, we need to better understand people and their behavior. We've compiled a series of steps that will help you apply behavioral science, create innovative solutions, and lead interventions to reach your goals with communities around the world. We've designed this overview to serve as a reference point as you travel through your BCD journey. If you are looking for a more comprehensive resource, we also have a workbook of worksheets and tools for each step. We know that choosing to put behavior front and center in your work is difficult and rewarding. We hope you'll notice the difference in the results.

Good luck!

What is Behavior-Centered Design (BCD)?

Behavior-Centered Design (BCD) is an approach that blends insights, methods, and tools from behavioral science and design thinking to build breakthrough solutions to environmental challenges.



Starting Your Journey

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Assess your starting point

We've designed a checklist on page 7 with the BCD steps and outcomes to help you decide where is best to begin.

Follow the steps

For each step, we describe the main goal (what), importance (why), example activities (tools), and indicators of when to move to the next step.

Use the tools

Each step is paired with a list of example activities and tools to help you complete your journey.

Take your time!

We understand that you may have time constraints and encourage you to fully complete and reflect on each step before moving to the next.

Want more?

Visit our website, behavior.rare.org, for additional resources on Behavior-Centered Design.

Understanding Behavior Change

There are many ways of understanding the motivations and barriers to behavior change. Rare's Center for Behavior & the Environment has a behavior change framework that is comprised of six behavioral levers. Each lever represents a category of intervention strategies based on evidence-based principles and case studies from behavioral and social science. The levers are discrete and able to be pulled in different combinations for different effects. You'll find more details in the Appendix.



MATERIAL INCENTIVES:

Increasing or decreasing costs, time, or effort for doing a behavior

CHOICE ARCHITECTURE:

Changing the context in which choices are made

RULES & REGULATIONS:

Enacting rules that promote or restrict a behavior

SOCIAL INFLUENCES:

Leveraging the behavior, beliefs, and expectations of others

INFORMATION:

Providing information about what the target behavior is, why it matters, and how to do it

EMOTIONAL APPEALS:

Using emotional messages to drive behavior

The Behavior-Centered Design Journey

1. FRAME



2. EMPATHIZE



3. MAP



4. IDEATE

5. PROTOTYPE



6. TEST



7. LAUNCH



8. ASSESS



Where to Begin?

BCD STEPS AND OUTCOMES

1. Frame

I have identified my target behavior and core actors.

2. Empathize

I have collected data about my core actors' motivations, barriers, and context for the target behavior.

3. Map

I have developed a hypothesis about what motivates my core actors to do the target behavior.

4. Ideate

I have created a prioritized list of solutions for my target behavior.

5. Prototype

I have built a prototype with the essential features of my behavioral solution.

6. Test

I have tested my prototyped solution and incorporated feedback from my core actors.

7. Launch

I can describe how, when, and where I launched my solution at scale.

8. Assess

I have results from my intervention that measure behavior adoption and a plan to monitor change over time.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in BCD

As behavior change designers, there is the potential for us to see people as all the same or even reinforce or worsen existing power structures that do harm. As you go through each of the Behavior-Centered Design steps, you will see important aspects to keep in mind related to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). These DEI considerations are designed to reduce the chance of doing harm and increase the intention that you bring to your work. We recognize that these DEI terms do originate in a Western framework and encourage you to focus on the principles of these terms, even if the terms themselves do not resonate as much with you.

Diversity = Celebrating and recognizing all the ways that people differ and are unique: representation.

Equity = Creating fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement for all people, while at the same time striving to identify and eliminate barriers that have prevented the full participation of some groups: fairness, justice.

Inclusion = Creating environments in which any individual or group can be and feel welcomed, respected, supported, and valued to fully participate: belonging.

STEP 1:

Frame



What:

Identify the actors, behaviors, and context for your environmental challenge.

Why:

To focus your efforts on behaviors and audiences that will have a meaningful impact on your environmental goals.

How:

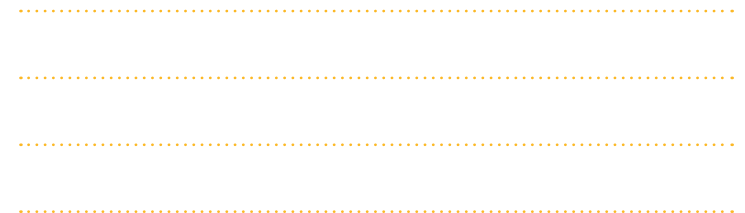
- Problem-behavior-actor mapping
- Actor mapping
- Community walks

DEI:

- Understand power dynamics
- Define distribution of benefits and harms
- Involve key actors and interested groups
- Review existing/local research on topic

When to move to the next step:

You have clearly defined a target or desired behavior and core actors within a greater context.



STEP 2:

Empathize



What:

Collect data from the core actors involved in your behavioral challenge.

Why:

Successful solutions depend on your ability to understand the motivations, barriers, and context for people's behavior.

How:

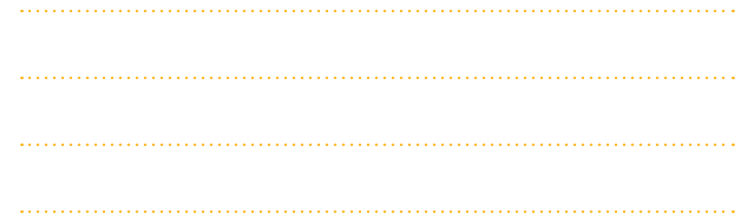
- Behavioral journeys
- Surveys
- Interviews
- Focus groups
- Participatory photography
- Participant observation

DEI:

- Collect and store data ethically
- Understand your position and identity
- Engage in deep and active listening
- Keep local dynamics, customs, and culture in mind

When to move to the next step:

You have collected data on your core actors' motivations, barriers, and context for the target behavior.



STEP 3:

Map



What:

Draw causal links between your data and behavioral science.

Why:

Analyzing your data with a behavioral lens and writing specific hypotheses will lead to more effective solutions.

How:

- Consensus workshops
- Data analysis
- Writing hypotheses
- Audience personas
- Theories of change

DEI:

- Ensure hypotheses reflect data, assumptions
- Check hypotheses for contextual factors
- Create space for many possible motivations and barriers

When to move to the next step:

You have written at least one hypothesis about what motivates your core actors to do the target behavior.



STEP 4:

Ideate



What:

Brainstorm, combine, and prioritize solution ideas

Why:

Developing a set of ideas based on your hypotheses provides the basis for your solution. Expanding the realm of possible ideas will help you think more creatively.

How:

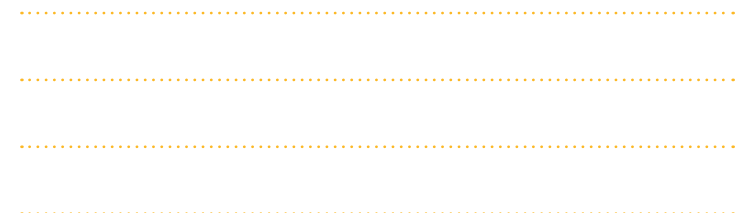
- Brainstorming
- Playing a solutions game
- Using an impact-feasibility matrix for ideas

DEI:


- Check that ideas minimize harm
- Involve interested partners and actors
- Generate solutions based on data, not assumptions
- Create space for a range of possible solution ideas

When to move to the next step:

You have a prioritized list of solutions related to your target behavior.



PAUSE



Before moving on to Prototype, reflect on whether your solution ideas align with what you learned about your audience in Steps 1-3.

STEP 5:

Prototype



What:

Develop a prototype (small-scale version) that captures your solution's essential features.

Why:

Prototypes help you make your idea tangible and testable without investing considerable resources.

How:

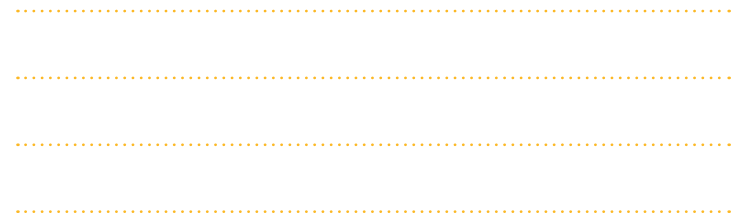
- Prototyping competitions
- Designing a low-cost user experience
- Drawing/sketching
- Modeling
- Storyboarding

DEI:

- Ask in which contexts and for which groups your prototype will be most effective
- Check that 'essential' features take into account local context, actors' preferences, and core learnings from feedback

When to move to the next step:

You have a prototype with the essential features of your solution.



STEP 6:

Test



What:

Test your prototype and make revisions. You might need to do this more than once!

Why:

It's important to validate or invalidate your hypotheses about what motivates behavior and gain feedback to improve your solution.

How:

- Conducting focus groups
- Conducting simulations
- Interviews

DEI:

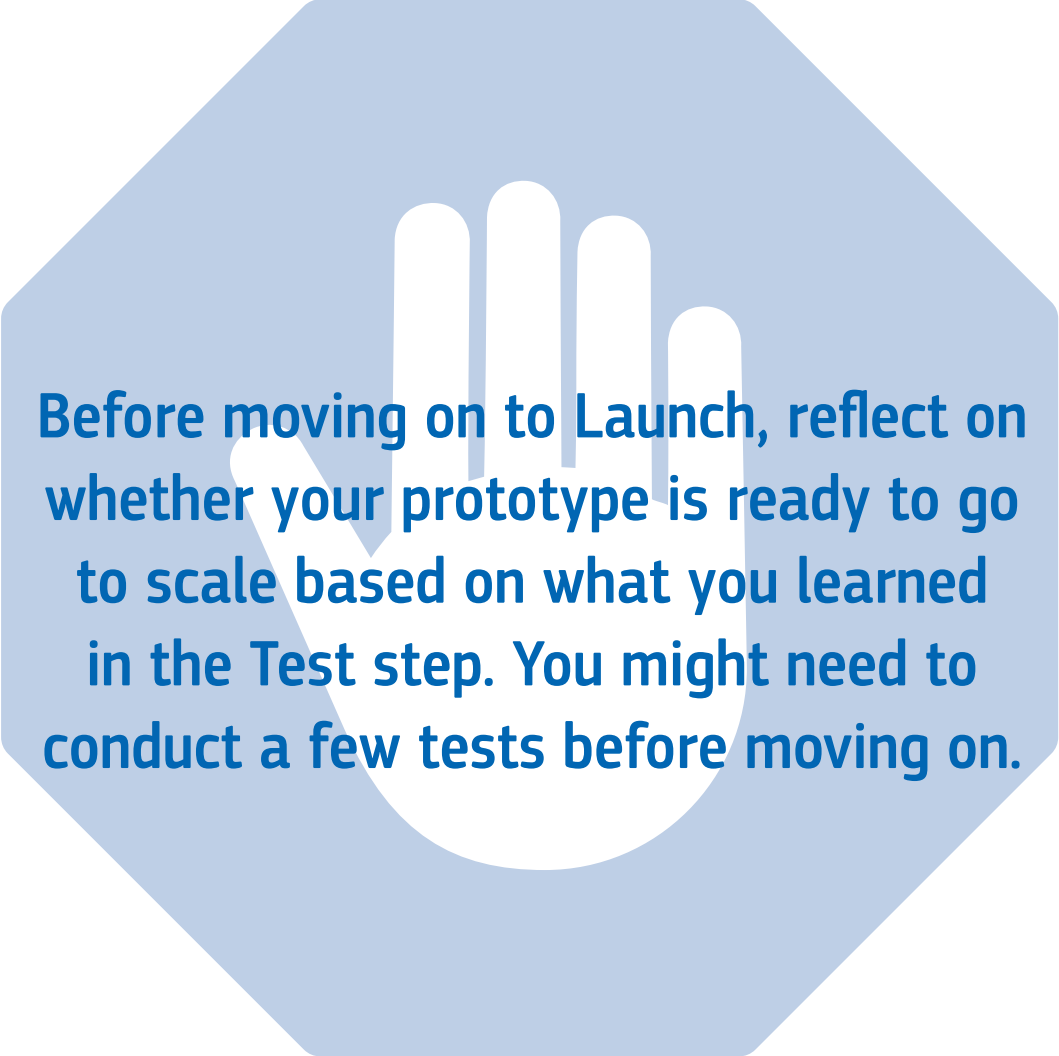
- Consider representation in your test group
- Consider potential negative impacts/for those who participate
- Consult local experts
- Compensate for participation if appropriate
- Commit to incorporating feedback

When to move to the next step:

You have tested your prototype and incorporated feedback from your core actors.



PAUSE



Before moving on to Launch, reflect on whether your prototype is ready to go to scale based on what you learned in the Test step. You might need to conduct a few tests before moving on.

STEP 7:

Launch



What:

Plan and launch your solution at scale.

Why:

See how your solution performs in the real world.

How:

- Completing an assessment plan
- Completing a launch plan and budget
- Planning interventions at scale

DEI:

- Involve interested parties and actors in implementation
- Identify any potential harms from implementation
- If conducting an experiment, check what is appropriate and legal

When to move to the next step:

You can describe how, when, and where you launched your solution at scale.

STEP 8:

Assess



What:

Measure the impact of your solution and monitor change over time.

Why:

Observe if behavior change is happening and to what degree.

How:

- Identifying research questions and indicators
- Conducting surveys, focus groups, or interviews
- Reflecting and sharing learnings
- Analyzing solution results

DEI:

- Report all outcomes, regardless of the result
- Share the results with diverse actors
- Communicate the results clearly
- Disaggregate results for different groups
- Monitor for long-term and unintended effects

When you have completed this step:

You have results from your intervention and plans to monitor change over time or ideas for how to enhance your solution.





You Did It!

What Now?

Congratulations! You have worked hard to get to this point, so take a moment to celebrate all that you have accomplished. Of course, the real goal of behavior change is not just seeing behavior adoption now or as a result of your intervention, but seeing adoption that lasts into the future.

Your task now is to continue to monitor your efforts and tweak it as new conditions arise:

- How is the community changing?
- What new barriers or opportunities are present?
- Can adopting your target behaviors lead to new desired behaviors?

We hope your BCD journey does not stop here and offers you the chance to make your current and future interventions even better.

Appendix

ABOUT THE FRAMEWORK

There are many ways of understanding the motivations and barriers to behavior change. Rare's Center for Behavior & the Environment has a behavior change framework that is comprised of six behavioral levers. Each lever represents a category of intervention strategies based on evidence-based principles and case studies from behavioral and social science. The levers are discrete and able to be pulled in different combinations for different effects.

For decades, the traditional environmental toolkit has consisted of these common levers to change behavior: information, rules and regulations, and material incentives.

These levers can be effective. But information does not necessarily lead to action, incentives can backfire or send the wrong message, and rules can be difficult to enforce. Research from behavioral science tells us about other powerful insights that could drive behavior change and enhance these common tools. For example, people make decisions based on their emotions, what other people are doing and expecting them to do, and how we structure the context for decision-making.

By expanding the toolkit with additional levers, we can design solutions that reflect people's full range of behavioral motivations and barriers. This means incorporating emotional appeals, social influences, and choice architecture more into our solutions.

Read about each of the levers as well as principles and strategies for applying them. The principles (in bold) serve to categorize the strategies (in bullets) and identify what needs to change in order for behavior to change. The strategies presented are options for designing solutions that address each behavioral principle. The strategies are not a checklist of requirements for behavior change, but instead provide flexibility for what will meet your goals. Draw upon the research you've conducted about your target audience and behavior to select which levers and strategies are most appropriate and effective for your given context.

Learn more at behavior.rare.org.



INFORMATION

Providing information about what the target behavior is, why it matters, and how to do it

Provide step-by-step instructions

- Offer training on the target behavior
- Provide materials that give instructions on how to do the target behavior

Build awareness and understanding

- Provide informational forums, meetings, or materials that describe the target behavior and its importance
- Communicate about the target behavior in a clear, concrete, and unambiguous way
- Give feedback on performing the target behavior



RULES & REGULATIONS

Enacting rules that promote restrict a behavior

Mandate behavior

- Enact mandates that require or encourage the target behavior

Prohibit behavior

- Enact prohibitions that limit or forbid the undesired behavior



MATERIAL INCENTIVES

Increasing or decreasing real or perceived costs, time, or effort for doing a behavior

Make it easy or the alternative hard

- Make the target behavior more convenient and accessible to do (e.g., remove barriers, provide substitutes)
- Make the undesired behavior more difficult to do (e.g., create friction points, barriers)

Give rewards or penalties

- Incentivize or reinforce the target behavior
- Penalize or fine for cases of the target behavior



EMOTIONAL APPEALS

Using emotional messages to drive behavior

Leverage emotions in specific contexts

- Pride: Use to motivate people to show others what they have done when they have engaged in reputation-enhancing behavior
- Hope: Use to motivate people to start a behavior when they can achieve a desired outcome while facing a threat
- Fear: Use to motivate people to avoid risks when they experience uncertainty or an immediate threat
- Anger: Use to motivate people to confront others when they experience or witness something that goes against their values
- Interest: Use to motivate people to seek information when something is novel and complex
- Prospect of shame: Use to motivate people to avoid an action when others might find out about socially-undesirable actions

Personalize the message

- Put a human face on campaigns and focus on a single story over abstract statistics
- Tailor messages to make them personally relevant, relatable, and appealing



SOCIAL INFLUENCES

Leveraging the behavior, beliefs, and expectations of others

Make engaging or not engaging in the target behavior observable

- Publicly broadcast who has and has not engaged in the target behavior
- Provide a way for people to show they are doing the target behavior

Make the target behavior the perceived norm

- Highlight possibility of social sanctions for doing the undesired behavior
- Share that people are currently doing the target behavior
- Create conversation around shared beliefs and expectations
- Promote cases of success with the target behavior
- Leverage credible and trusted messengers doing the target behavior
- Facilitate peer or community exchanges where others can observe and gain support for the target behavior

Eliminate excuses for not engaging in the target behavior

- Encourage public commitments or pledges to drive the target behavior
- Provide visible indicators that signal support for the target behavior (e.g., hats, badges)



CHOICE ARCHITECTURE

Changing the context in which choices are made

Direct attention

- Make the target behavior the default option
- Draw attention to the target behavior by making it salient

Simplify messages and decisions

- Streamline complex decisions to focus on key information or actions
- Provide shortcuts for a target behavior with many steps or options

Use timely moments and prompts

- Target moments of transition and habit formation
- Provide prompts and reminders about the target behavior

Facilitate planning and goal setting

- Provide support in making a plan to achieve the target behavior
- Use commitments to bind or limit future decisions

Notes

The page contains two vertical columns of horizontal dotted lines, intended for writing notes. Each column consists of 20 evenly spaced, parallel dotted lines extending across the width of the column.

Notes

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing notes, arranged in two columns.



Rare inspires change so people and nature thrive

Learn more at behavior.rare.org and follow us @Rare_org

