



SYMPOSIUM: COMPLEXITY AND BEHAVIOUR CHANGE INTERVENTIONS

OPENING REMARKS
Nelli Hankonen
October 8-9, 2020

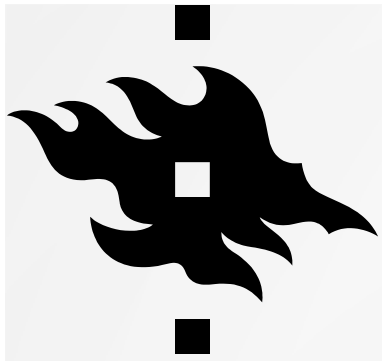
**BEHAVIOR CHANGE
SCIENCE & POLICY**

Funded by the Finnish
Cultural Foundation

HELSINGIN YLIOPISTO
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UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI

Nelli Hankonen





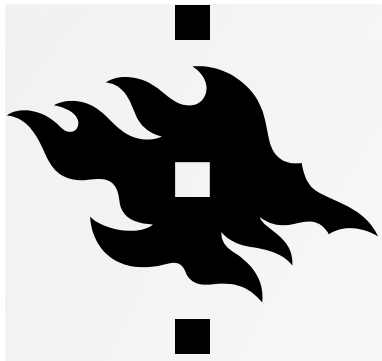
OVERVIEW

- The entire Argumenta project and other symposia: Where are we now?
 - Working group
 - Background for the project: Need for more use of behavioural and social sciences in public policy
- This symposium
 - Program
 - Instructions for participation in this symposium! **#bespfin**
 - Slack (see your email!)

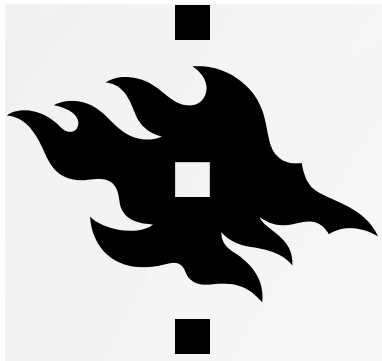
Members of the working group

- **Nelli Hankonen**, Associate Professor, University of Helsinki (chair)
- **Elina Renko**, Postdoctoral Researcher, University of Helsinki (coordinator)
- **Markus Kanerva**, Senior Specialist, Prime Minister's Office
- **Sirpa Kekkonen**, Head of Government Strategy Secretariat, Prime Minister's Office
- **Aino Kääriäinen**, University Lecturer, Social Work, University of Helsinki
- **Taru Lintunen**, Professor, Sport and Exercise Psychology, University of Jyväskylä
- **Kirsi-Marja Lonkila**, Senior Expert/Research Impact, Demos Helsinki
- **Topi Miettinen**, Professor, Economics, Hanken School of Economics
- **Harri Oinas-Kukkonen**, Professor, Information Processing Science, University of Oulu
- **Jukka Pirttilä**, Professor, Public Economics, University of Helsinki
- **Juho Saari**, Professor, Sociology, University of Tampere
- **Katariina Salmela-Aro**, Professor, Educational Sciences, University of Helsinki
- **Maija Setälä**, Professor, Political Science, University of Turku





- Human behaviour change is key to several large-scale societal problems
 - Environmental sustainability
 - Health and well-being
 - Economic productivity, etc.
- Behaviour change interventions range from individual-level psychological strategies (e.g. nudging) to legislative, regulatory, structural changes
- Behaviour change can refer to that of the citizen, service providers, etc.
 - Changing living conditions and societal structures often requires *someone's* behaviour change



BEHAVIOURAL SCIENCE IS OFTEN OVERLOOKED IN PUBLIC POLICY



Behavioural, Environmental, Social and Systems Interventions (for pandemic preparedness)

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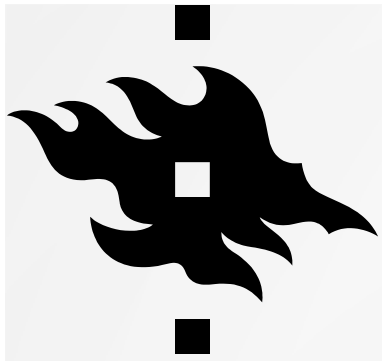
[Webinars/Videos](#)

[Links](#)

[Protocols](#)

Suppression of epidemics cannot rely solely on the hope of effective vaccines and/or medical treatment: **we need a "Plan B"** of effective behavioural, environmental, social and systems interventions (BESSI) to reduce transmission.

The BESSI Collaboration aim to provide information about planned and completed research into reducing SARS-CoV-2 transmission, and facilitate both novel and replication research.

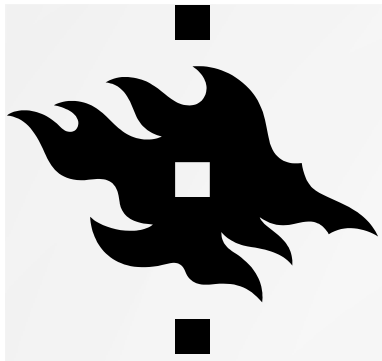


BEHAVIOURAL SCIENCE IS OFTEN OVERLOOKED IN PUBLIC POLICY



Weekly score card of controlled trials*





OBJECTIVES OF THIS ARGUMENTA PROJECT



- To advance **quality of academic research** on influencing behaviour change – both theory and methodology
- To **combine and integrate aspects from different scientific disciplines** to strengthen solution-oriented social and behavioural science
- To help researchers, government and third sector organisations find **novel forms of collaboration and synergies**
- To improve opportunities to conduct **high-quality intervention research**
- To **enhance use of research & science in designing policy**, enhance policy makers' opportunities to make policies more fit-for-purpose and impactful
- To communicate contributions of science and **improve practice in several applied areas** (e.g. social work, incl. child protection, healthcare, leadership, mental health)

FIVE SYMPOSIA:

05/2019

10/2019

2/2020

04/2020

10/2020

I
**Intervention
evaluation &
field
experiments**

II
**Behavioural
insights in
developing public
policy &
interventions**

III
**Reverse
translation:**
Practice-based
evidence

IV
**Implementation
& dissemination**

V
Complexity

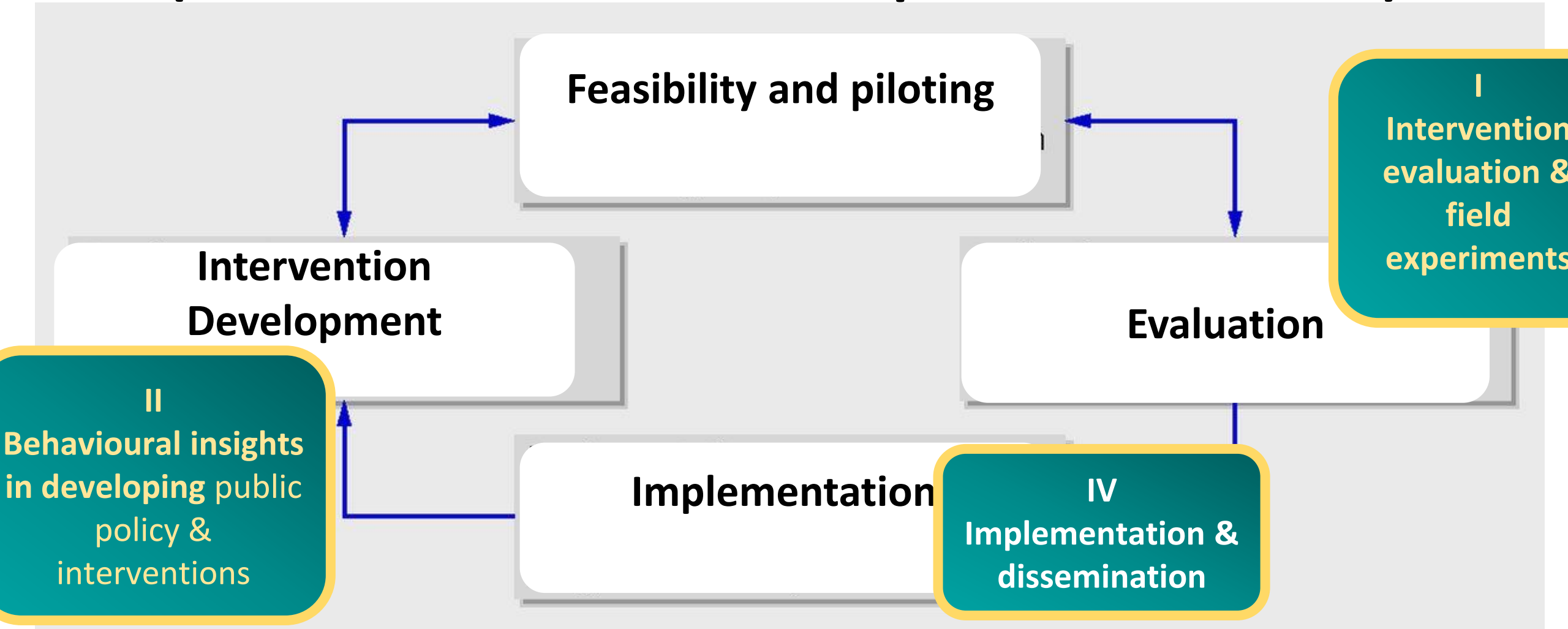
10-12/2020, Spring 2021

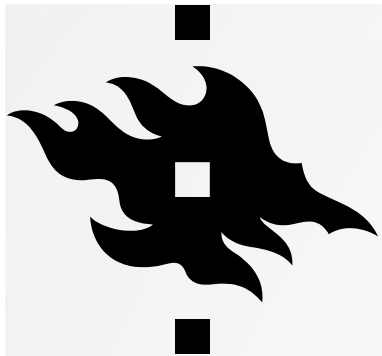
Workshop and toolbox for policy makers:
Evidence-based policy and knowledge utilization

Most talks recorded & openly available! Links from our website

UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI

Phases in intervention research (UK MRC Guidance on complex interventions)





OECD TOOLKIT (2019)

[ic Governance](#) > [Regulatory policy](#) > Tools and Ethics for Applied Behavioural Insights: The BASIC Toolkit - en



Tools and Ethics for Applied Behavioural Insights: The BASIC Toolkit

Behavioural insights (BI) are lessons derived from the behavioural and social sciences, including decision making, psychology, cognitive science, neuroscience, organisational and group behaviour. Public bodies around the world are increasingly using BI to design and implement better public policies based on evidence of the actual behaviour and biases of citizens and businesses. This toolkit provides practitioners and policy makers with a step-by-step process for analysing a policy problem, building strategies, and developing behaviourally informed interventions.

[^ Less](#)

Published on June 18, 2019



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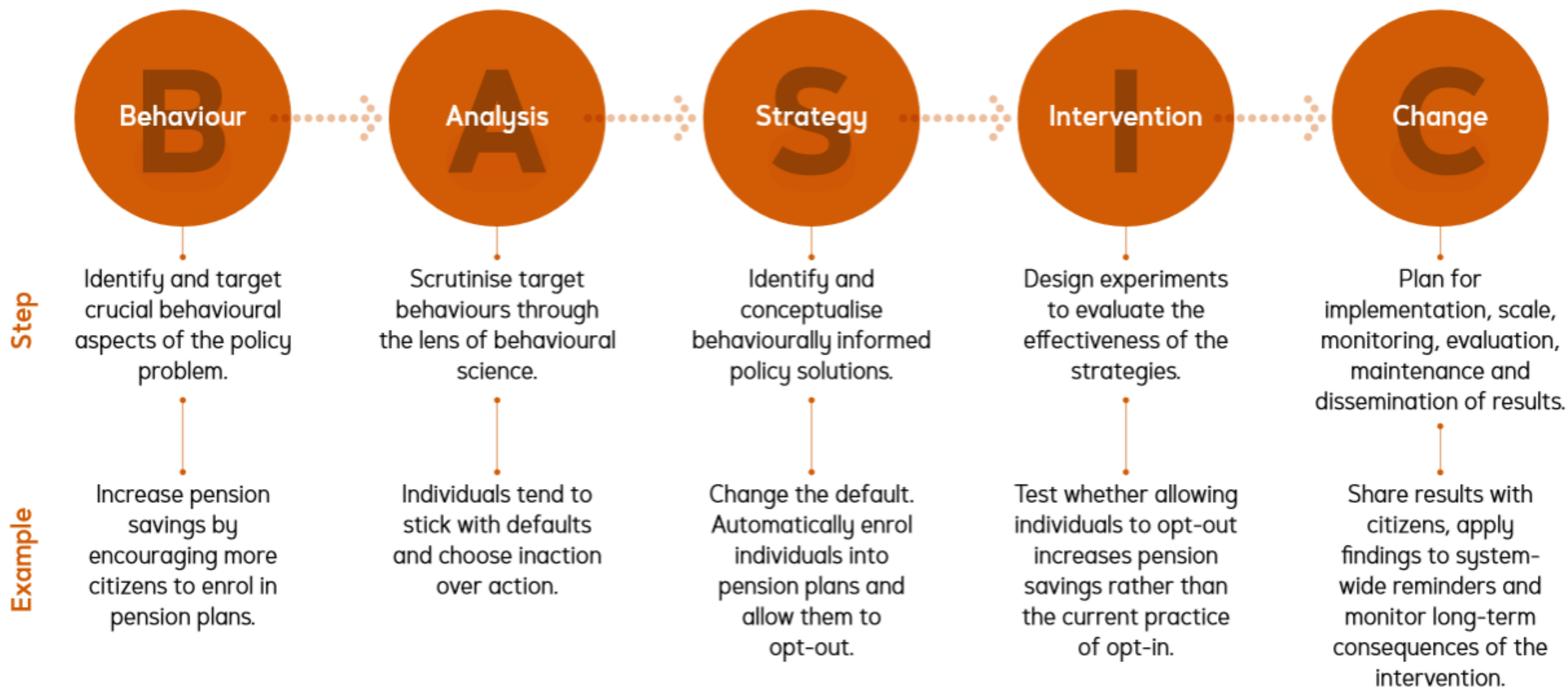
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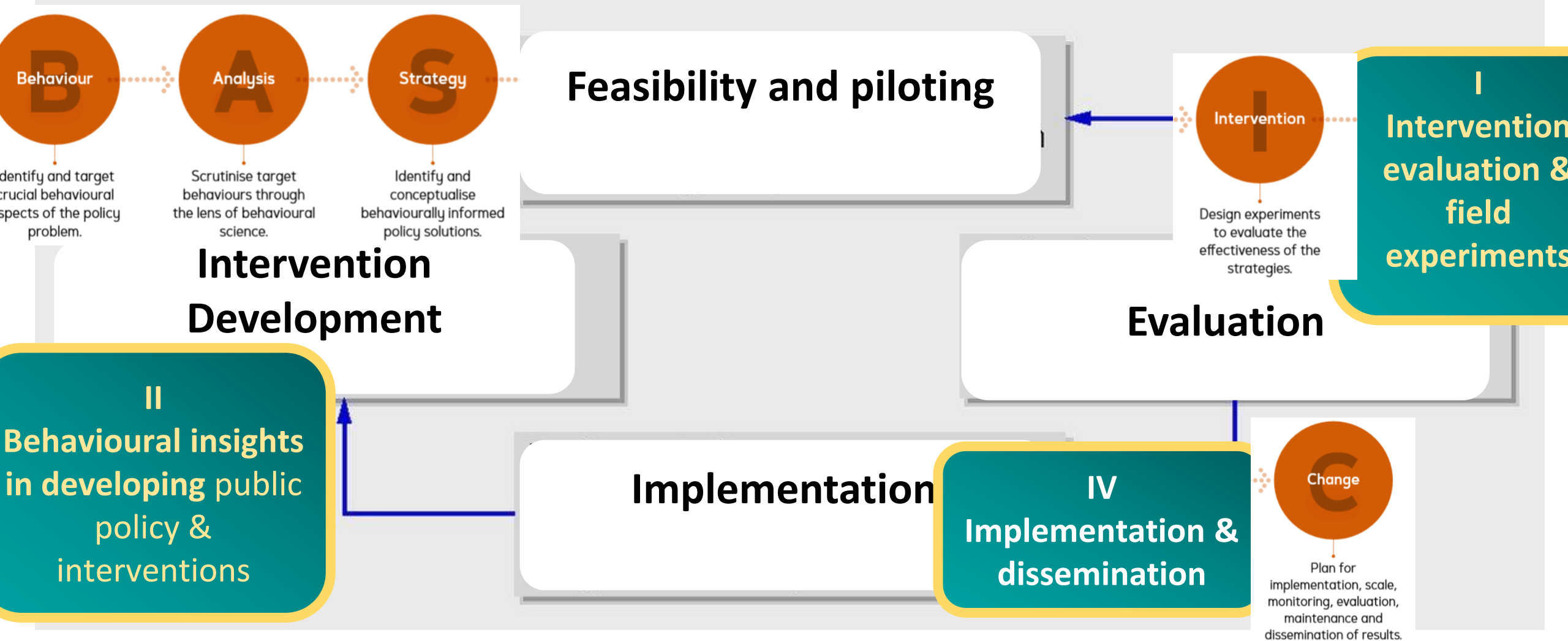
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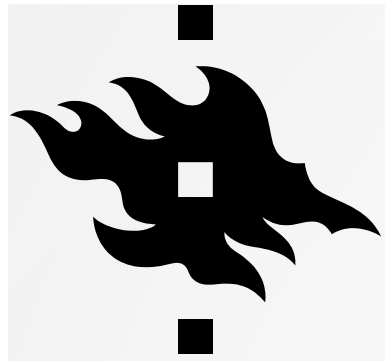
[See also Francesca Papa's \(OECD\) talk in the 2nd BeSP symposium:
<https://unitube.it.helsinki.fi/unitube/embed.html?id=9e399029-c479-4531-956b-e0f36f3fcd04>](#)

FIGURE 2.1. The BASIC Framework



Phases in intervention research (UK MRC Guidance on complex interventions)



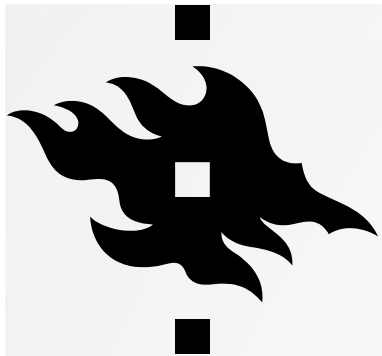


THE 1ST BESP SYMPOSIUM: INTERVENTION EVALUATION AND FIELD EXPERIMENTS - *TALKS AVAILABLE:*

<https://www.helsinki.fi/en/conferences/1st-behaviour-change-science-policy-besp-symposium>

- **Dr. Michael Sanders:** Practical Science - how we bring rigour into the evaluation of policy
 - Discussant: **Dr. Mira Fischer**
- **Prof. Petri Ylikoski:** Mechanism-based thinking
- **Assoc. Prof. Jaakko Kuorikoski:** Severe testing
- **Dr. Samuli Reijula:** The problem of extrapolation
- **Prof. Sharon Simpson:** Updated guidance on developing and evaluating complex interventions
- **Elina Aaltio & Nanne Isokuortti:** The effectiveness of an intervention depends on the implementation fidelity
- **Dr. Jouko Verho:** Could we increase the use of randomised field experiments in Finland?
- **Prof. Jeffery Carpenter:** Experimental innovations to aid evidence-based policy-making
- **Prof. Martin Hagger:** Why and how do interventions work? Evaluating mechanisms of impact
- **Dr. Jennifer McSharry:** Evaluating the feasibility of implementing interventions into practice
- **Prof. Kaisa Kotakorpi:** Field experiments with tax administration





THE 2ND SYMPOSIUM: BEHAVIOURAL INSIGHTS IN DEVELOPING INTERVENTIONS

THURSDAY

Plenary session (Stage, Think Corner):

- **Prof. Susan Michie:** Keynote: Applying behavioural science to policy and interventions: a tool for collaboration
- **Prof. Harri Oinas-Kukkonen:** Digital intervention design
- **Adj. Prof. Pilvikki Absetz:** Shared functions but contextualised content and delivery - the SMART2D intervention to prevent and control type 2 diabetes in three different disadvantaged settings
- **Ass. Prof. Nelli Hankonen:** Common tasks and principles in behaviour change intervention development frameworks: Integrative review

Parallel workshops:

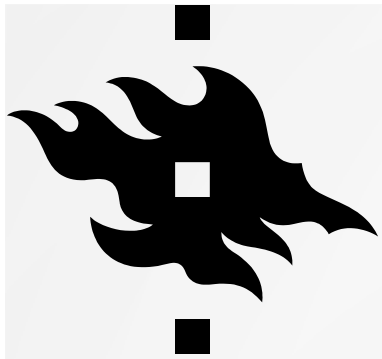
- **Workshop 1.** Theorising and modeling causality & mechanisms of behavior change workshop.
Facilitators: Assoc. Prof. Jaakko Kuorikoski, Dr. Samuli Reijula
Konsistorisali (Uni Main Building):
- **Workshop 2.** Empirical work-in-progress in Finland
Think Lounge (Think Corner, 2nd floor)

Reception/networking: **Urbanarium (Porthania)**

FRIDAY

Plenary session (Stage, Think Corner):

- **Markus Kanerva (Prime Minister's Office):** Opening; yesterday's key takeouts
- **Dr. Adam Oliver:** Keynote: Towards a New Political Economy of Behavioral Public Policy
- **Sirpa Kekkonen (Head of Government Strategy Secretariat):** Use of behavioral insight in the Policy-making of the Finnish Government– overview of recent developments
- **Dr. Lauri Sääksvuori:** Behavioral insights and influenza immunization: Evidence from a large-scale RCT
- **Prof. Maija Setälä:** Deliberative mini-publics facilitating voter knowledge and judgement: Experience from a Finnish local referendum
- **Francesca Papa** (distance connection): The international frontiers of behavioural public policy
- **Eeva Rantala:** Nudging healthy eating and physical activity: Experiences from the StopDia at Work intervention
- **Prof. Cass Sunstein:** Keynote lecture and Q&A session



HOW CAN SCIENCE HELP SOCIETY?

Behavioural Insights Applied to Policy

European Report 2016

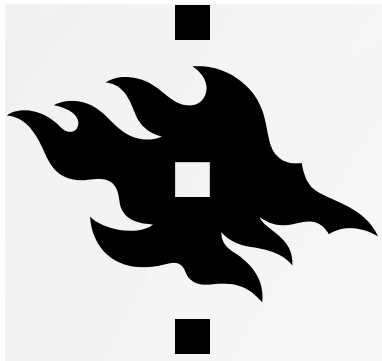
“Overall, the evidence shows that insights from **behavioural sciences are contributing to reshaping public policy** in a wide range of domains, in particular employment, consumer protection, health, taxation, environment and transport. Furthermore, some successful behavioural initiatives seem to be **replicated or adapted across** countries, and this includes well-known examples (e.g. receipt-based tax lotteries) but also less obvious ones (e.g. the penalty points system for driving offences).”

Joana Sousa Lourenço

Emanuele Ciriolo

Sara Rafael Almeida

Xavier Troussard



HOW CAN A FOCUS ON SOCIETAL PROBLEMS HELP SCIENCE?

Should social science be more solution-oriented?

Duncan J. Watts

Over the past 100 years, social science has generated a tremendous number of theories on the topics of individual and collective human behaviour. However, it has been much less successful at reconciling the innumerable inconsistencies and contradictions among these competing explanations, a situation that has not been resolved by recent advances in 'computational social science'. In this Perspective, I argue that this 'incoherency problem' has been perpetuated by an historical emphasis in social science on the advancement of theories over the solution of practical problems. I argue that one way for social science to make progress is to adopt a more solution-oriented approach, starting first with a practical problem and then asking what theories (and methods) must be brought to bear to solve it. Finally, I conclude with a few suggestions regarding the sort of problems on which progress might be made and how we might organize ourselves to solve them.

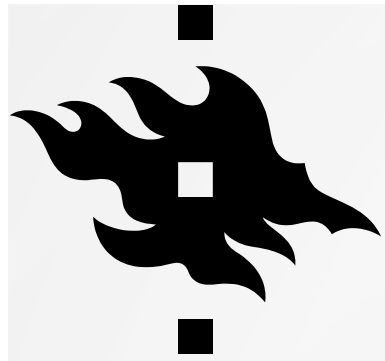
As a sociologist who spends a lot of time in the company of physicists, computer scientists and other outsiders to my field, I am often asked a question of the sort: "What is the social science perspective on X?", where X is some topic of interest. To a social scientist, the question sounds hopelessly naïve: for any topic X, social science has dozens, if not hundreds, of perspectives, but no single perspective on which there is anything close to universal agreement. Nevertheless, I would argue that it is worth taking the question seriously, if only because it highlights an important difference between the social and physical/engineering sciences. Physicists disagree of course — for example, about the best way

theories over the solution of practical problems. Finally, I argue that one possible solution to the incoherency problem is to reject the traditional distinction between basic and applied science, and instead seek to advance theory specifically in the service of solving real-world problems.

Before proceeding, however, let me clarify two points of possible confusion. First, I am not arguing that all, or even most, of social science should become solution-oriented. Social science can serve many purposes — for example, the field can challenge common-sense assumptions about the nature of social reality^{7–9}, provide rich descriptions of lived experience^{10–12} inspire new ways of thinking

THIS SYMPOSIUM:

THURSDAY



Helsinki time: 12.00-16.00 (11.00-15.00 CEST)

- **Assoc Prof. Nelli Hankonen:** Opening words
- **Prof. Marijn de Bruin**, Radboud University Medical Center: Integrating behavioural science in COVID-19 prevention efforts: the Dutch case
- **Assoc Prof. Nelli Hankonen**, ([@NHankonen](#)) University of Helsinki: Why is it useful to consider complexity insights to behaviour change research & investigate theories empirically with a complexity science lens?

Break

- **Olli-Pekka Heinonen**, Director General, Finnish National Agency for Education: Complexity-informed policymaking
- **KEYNOTE Assoc. Prof. Gwen Marchand** ([@cupohappy](#)), University of Nevada: Complexity Science in the Design and Evaluation of Behaviour Interventions
 - *Note: Gwen's Q&A in Slack & FB only!*

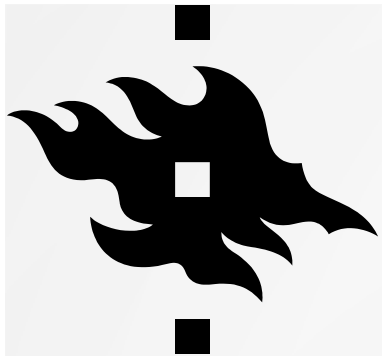
FRIDAY

Helsinki time: 12.00-16.00 (11.00-15.00 CEST)

- **Prof. Jari Saramäki** ([@jarisaramaki](#)), Aalto University: How do behaviours, ideas, and contagious diseases spread through networks?
- **Matti Heino** ([@Heinonmatti](#)), University of Helsinki: Studying complex motivation systems: Capturing dynamical patterns of change in data from self-assessments and wearable technology
- **CASE Nanne Isokuortti** ([@nanne_i](#)), University of Helsinki: From exploration to sustainment: understanding complex implementation in public social services
- **CASE Ira Alanko**, Ministry of Finance, Finland: The AuroraAI Programme

Break

- **Daniele Proverbio**, University of Luxembourg: Smooth or abrupt? How dynamical systems change their state
- **KEYNOTE Prof. Ken Resnicow**, University of Michigan: Behavior Change is a Complex Process. How does that impact theory, research and practice



INTERACTIONS:



- **Our goal** – interdisciplinary bridge building and learning!
- **Q & A AFTER THE TALKS**
 - Please type your questions & comments in the Zoom Q&A window
 - Chair can ask the question, or, RAISE HAND to present your question/comment!
 - Everybody can vote for their favourite questions

DISCUSSIONS & SOCIAL MEETS

- We invite you to [join discussions on our Slack space](#), and also meet other participants
- If you prefer Facebook, you can also discuss in the FB: BeSP Forum
- Get to know at least one new person on these platforms? 😊

ALSO:

Tweet! [#bespfin](#)

Make use of the **recorded talks** later!

Organising team of this symposium

- Coordinator Dr Elina Renko
- Sarmite Puukko, Matti Heino, Minttu Palsola & Nelli Hankonen

If you have tech problems, ask for help in the CHAT 😊



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Slack: ***(See the invitation in your email!)***

