

BEHAVIOURAL ECONOMICS AND SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE

THE BRAIN HAS 2 OPERATING SYSTEMS

REFLECTIVE

Systematic & deliberate.
Used to perform unfamiliar activities.



Traditional economics assumes that **humans are rational**



AUTOMATIC

Rapid & instinctive.
Used to perform day-to-day activities



Behavioural economics acknowledges that humans may be **irrational** and seeks to **explain why**

WHY DOES THIS MATTER IN SOCIAL WORK ?

Behavioural economics allows us to understand and help our clients better!

BEHAVIOURAL ECONOMICS IN ACTION

Behavioural economics tells us that...

Therefore, we can...

Example 1: Job search



Clients who failed previously view job search negatively

Emphasise the client's strengths and reinforce his identity

Clients may be overwhelmed by information

Specify the steps for the client to take

Example 2: Hotline services



Clients may feel stressed if they are placed on hold for a long period

Provide a message on the estimated waiting time and offer support to prevent clients from hanging up. For example, 'Please wait for five minutes. Once we answer your call, we will do our best to address your needs.'

The uncertainty of the length of wait time may cause clients to hang up

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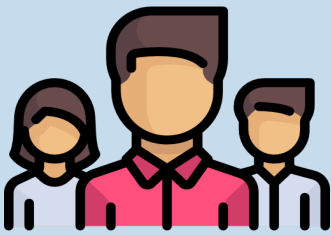
WHAT IS BEHAVIOURAL ECONOMICS?

Behavioural Economics = study of *Human Behaviour*



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Not always influenced by *cost-benefit analysis* but shaped by *social and emotional factors*

INSIGHTS AND APPLICATION TO SOCIAL WORK



MESSENGER'S IDENTITY SHAPES BEHAVIOUR

People are influenced by the messenger of the news/information.

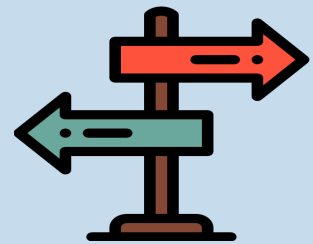
e.g. Receiving counsel or hearing testimonies from people in the **same age range** will be more relatable for youth delinquents.



PUBLIC PROMISES PROMOTE CONSISTENCY

People are more consistent with promises that they make in public.

e.g. When helping clients quit substance abuse, get them to sign commitment contracts **in the presence of loved ones**.



REDUCE DECISION FATIGUE

People are overwhelmed when there are too many choices.

e.g. When helping clients apply for assistance, **present the most relevant options first**.

**SMALL CHANGES CAN CREATE
BETTER OUTCOMES!**