

**THE
BEHAVIOURAL
INSIGHTS TEAM** ♦

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH  Cabinet Office

TI Summer School: Applying Behavioural Insights

Luke Ravenscroft

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Answer 3 questions:

1. Will **We are going to create a new policy today!**
2. How
3. How do we test whether our changes had an impact?

1) Introduction

- EAST
- Group exercise – **Design an intervention**

2) Running a trial

- TEST framework
- RCTs
- Group exercise – **Design a trial**

3) Applying to transparency and corruption

About the team

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There was a lot of scepticism

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Cameron's 'nudge unit' should be given the elbow, says Labour MP



Craig Woodhouse, Political Reporter
27 Jul 2011

[f Recommend](#) 1

A unit set up in Whitehall to encourage people to make better life choices came under fire after its staff received a travel bill.

Labour MP Luciana Berger, who was in the Cabinet Office, was

UN at a time when householders were feeling the pinch.

“David Cameron’s Vanity Project”

The Telegraph

HOME NEWS SPORT **FINANCE** COMMENT BLOGS CULTURE TRAVEL LIFESTYLE

Companies | Comment | Personal Finance | Economics | Markets | Your Business | Olympic

Economics

Whitehall won't be 'nudged', finds National Audit Office

David Cameron's "Behavioural Insights Team" billed as the answer to achieving social change without resorting to legislation

Editorial **brendan o'neill**

A message to the illiberal Nudge Industry: push off

The 'politics of the brain' is a threat to choice, freedom and democracy - which is why spiked is declaring war against it.

[Write a letter](#) [Print](#) [Email](#) [Tweet this](#) [Recommend](#)

In earlier eras, the revelation that there was a Behavioural Insight Team at the heart of government, dedicated to finding ways to reshape the public's thoughts, choices and actions, would have caused outrage. It would have brought to mind some of the darker antics of the Soviet Union, which treated certain beliefs as mental illnesses to be fixed, or maybe O'Brien, the torturer in George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, who boasts that the human mind is 'infinitely malleable'.

Yet the news that David Cameron

5

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[Buy this article](#)

UN calls for help of Cameron's 'nudge unit'

All in the Mind

The "Nudge" to Good Behaviour

The Ministry of Mind Control

May 2013 | By Sarah Townsend

The government's mysterious Nudge Unit
September 15, 2011 12:11 am

HOME » COMMENT » COLUMNISTS » ALASDAIR PALMER
David Cameron is nudging us in the right direction
The Coalition's 'Nudge Unit' offers a novel way of persuading

Whitehall 'Nudge'

PM's nudgers score notable successes

By George Parker, Political Editor



News » Politics

David Cameron's enthusiasm for "nudging" people to make the right choices could save the taxpayer hundreds of millions of pounds over the course of the parliament.

The nudge unit – has it worked so far?

Since 2010 David Cameron has been finding ways to improve so many things that the 'nudge unit' is going into business. Which initiatives really worked?

Nudging the world toward snuff interview with Richard Thaler

News > UK > UK Politics

Give us a nudge and we'll behave ourselves

Daniel Finkelstein

How organ donation is getting nudge in the right direction: trial could pave way for 100,000 extra donors each year

Leo Benedictus
The Guardian, Thursday 2 May 2013

Spending Review | G8 | Conservatives | Liberal Democrats

HOME » NEWS » POLITICS

Inside the Coalition's controversial 'Nudge Unit'

Deep inside Whitehall, psychologists are finding ways to make you insure your car, pay your taxes, and even quit smoking. Is the Coalition's controversial 'Nudge Unit' finally paying off?

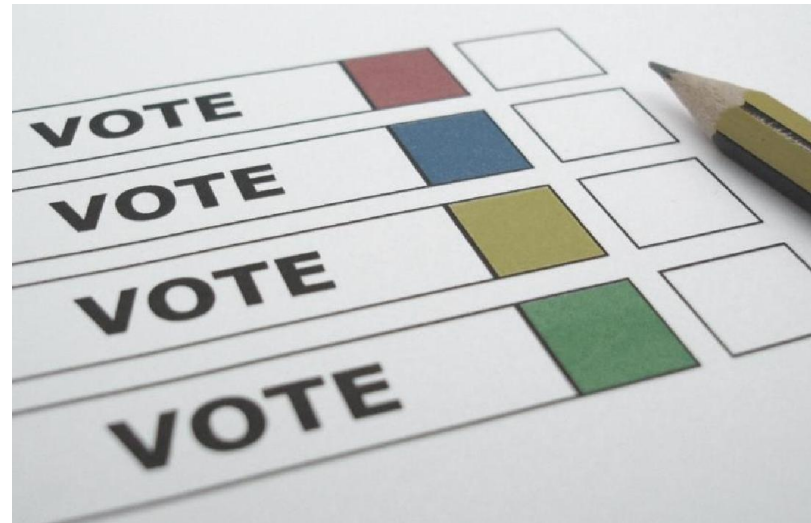
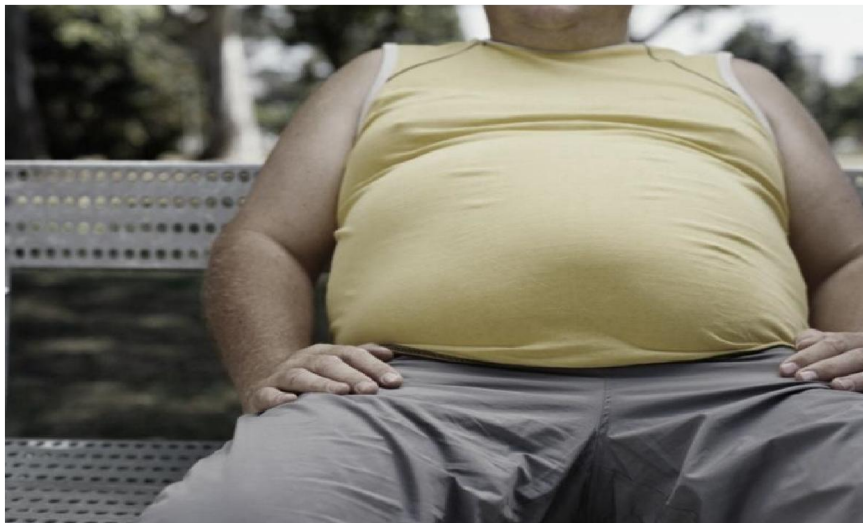
Effective things can come from small places

Even if you're wrong about how something works, it can still work

What are behavioural insights?

Most policy concerns behaviour

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Traditional policy levers

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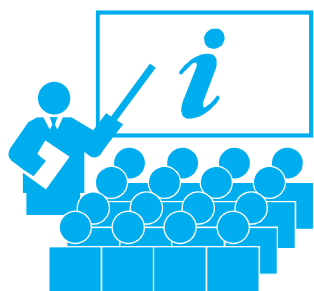
Regulation



Incentives



Information



**Behavioural
Insights**

We are not hyper-rational supercomputers with infinite time:

- . we rely on 'automatic thinking'
- . we have limited attention so use shortcuts
- . we change our behaviour depending on the context

We are not hyper-rational supercomputers with infinite time:

- we rely on 'automatic thinking'
- we have limited attention so use shortcuts
- we change our behaviour depending on the context

Automatic thinking: Two systems

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System 1



FAST

- Automatic
- Little or no effort
- No sense of control
- Intuitive

System 2



SLOW

- Effortful
- Needs attention
- Controllable
- Analytic

Automatic thinking: Two systems

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A bat and ball cost a €1.10. The bat costs €1 more than the ball. How much does the ball cost?

- A. €0.01
- B. €0.10
- C. €0.05



Automatic thinking: Two systems

A bat and ball cost a €1.10. The bat costs €1 more than the ball. How much does the ball cost?

We see €1.10

We see €0.10

System 1

BUT.....

If ball costs €0.10, bat must cost €1.10 – and
€1.10 + €0.10 = €1.20

50% of students at
Harvard, Princeton,
MIT
got this wrong!

We are not hyper-rational supercomputers with infinite time:

- we rely on 'automatic thinking'
- we have limited attention so use shortcuts
- we change our behaviour depending on the context

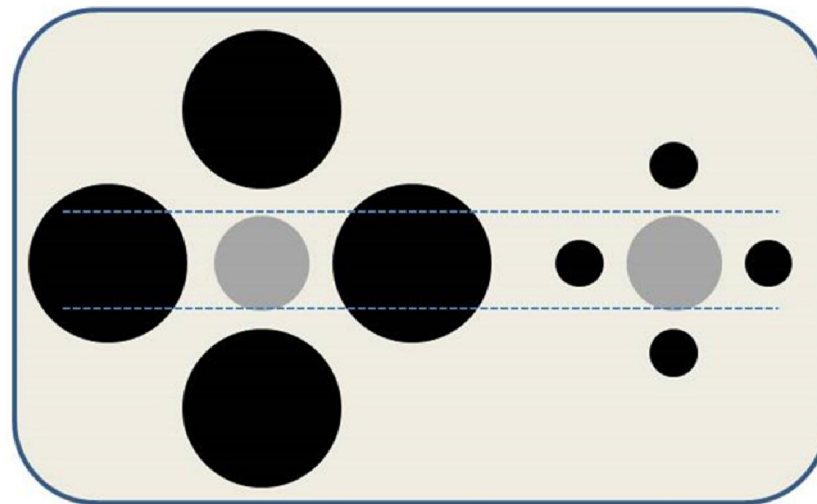
Mental short cuts; limited attention

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We use shortcuts to make sense of the world

We use shortcuts to make sense of the world

Shortcuts used by system 1

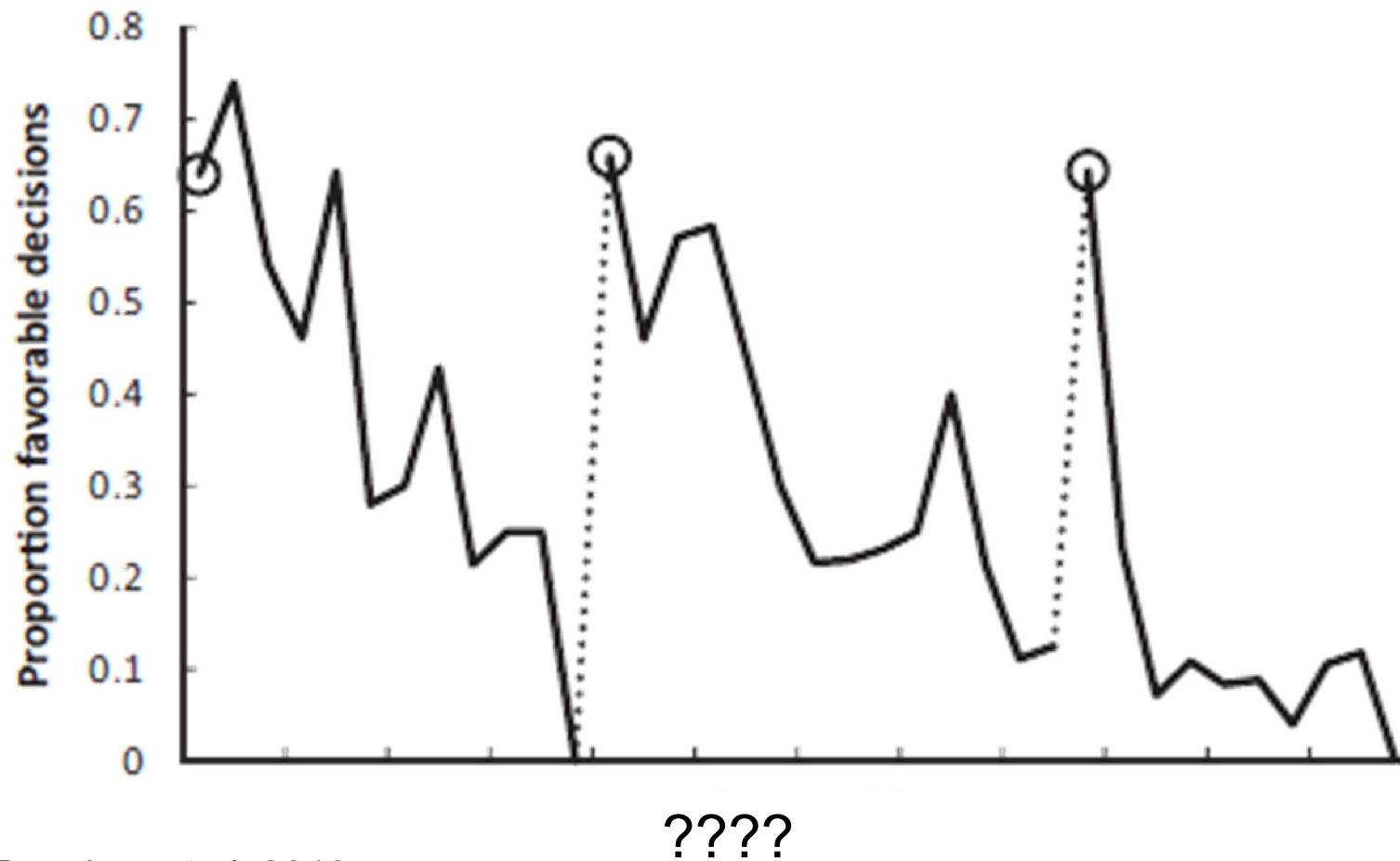


Upside: saves time and energy

Downside: sometimes creates problems

Mental short cuts; limited attention

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Danziger et al. 2010

We are not hyper-rational supercomputers with infinite time:

- . we rely on 'automatic thinking'
- . we have limited attention so use shortcuts
- . we change our behaviour depending on the context

You go out to buy a belt. You find one for £12.

Someone tells you that can save £5 if you walk five minutes down the road to another shop. Do you walk five minutes to save the money?

A. Yes

B. No



You go out to buy a TV. You find one for £220.

Someone tells you that can save £5 if you walk five minutes down the road to another shop. Do you walk five minutes to save the money?

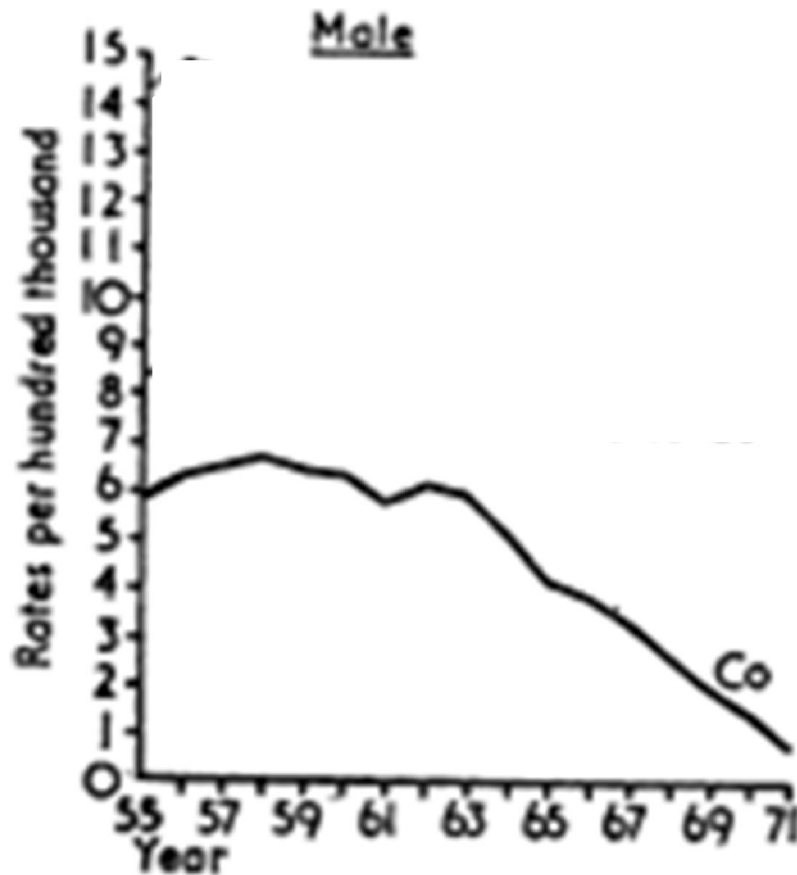
A. Yes

B. No



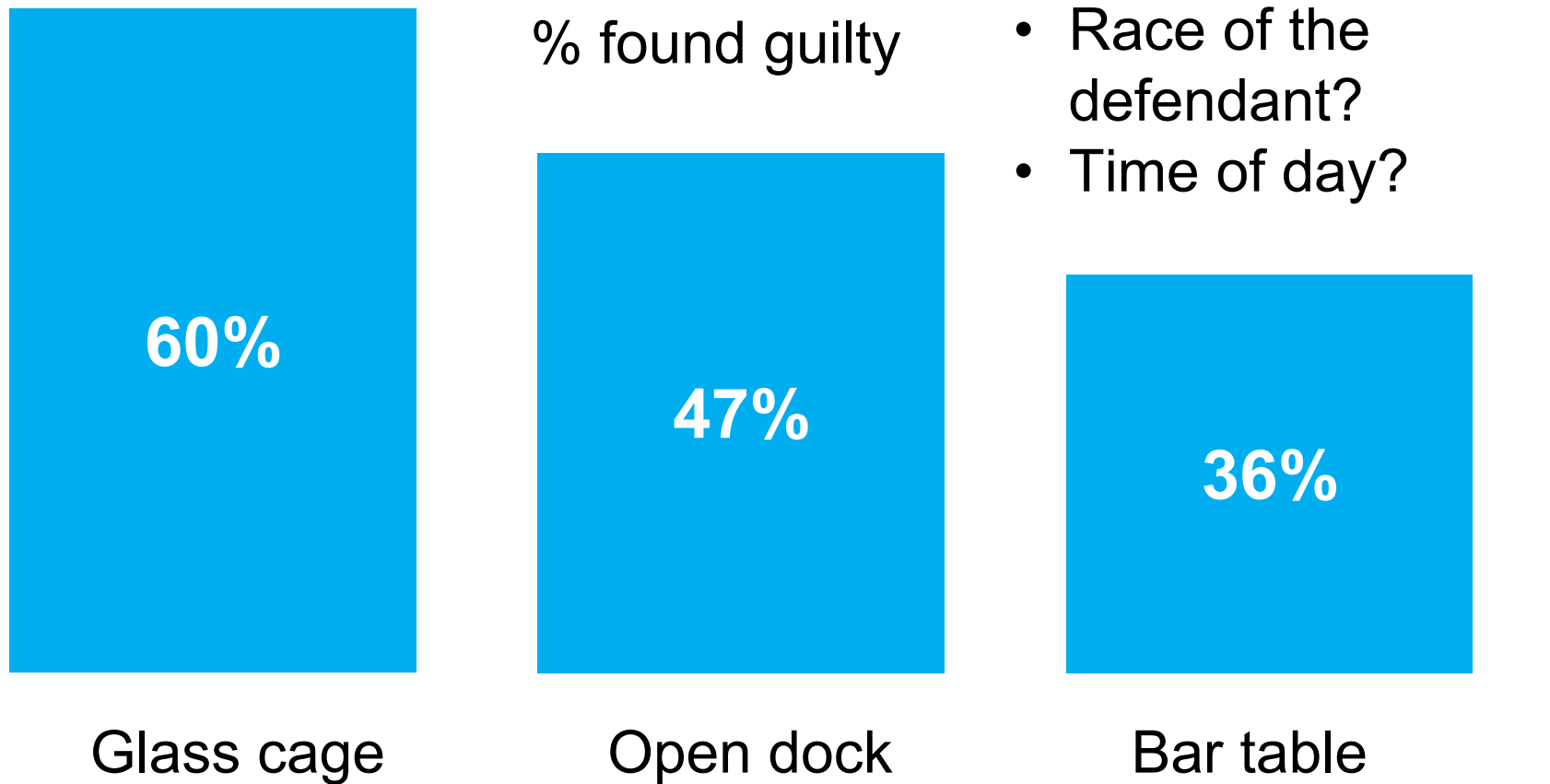
But do people just compensate elsewhere?

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Kreitman (1976). *The coal gas story. UK suicide rates, 1960-71. Journal of Preventative medicine.*

Context matters



Tait et al, 2014

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EAST: a framework for applying behavioural insights

Framework for applying BI

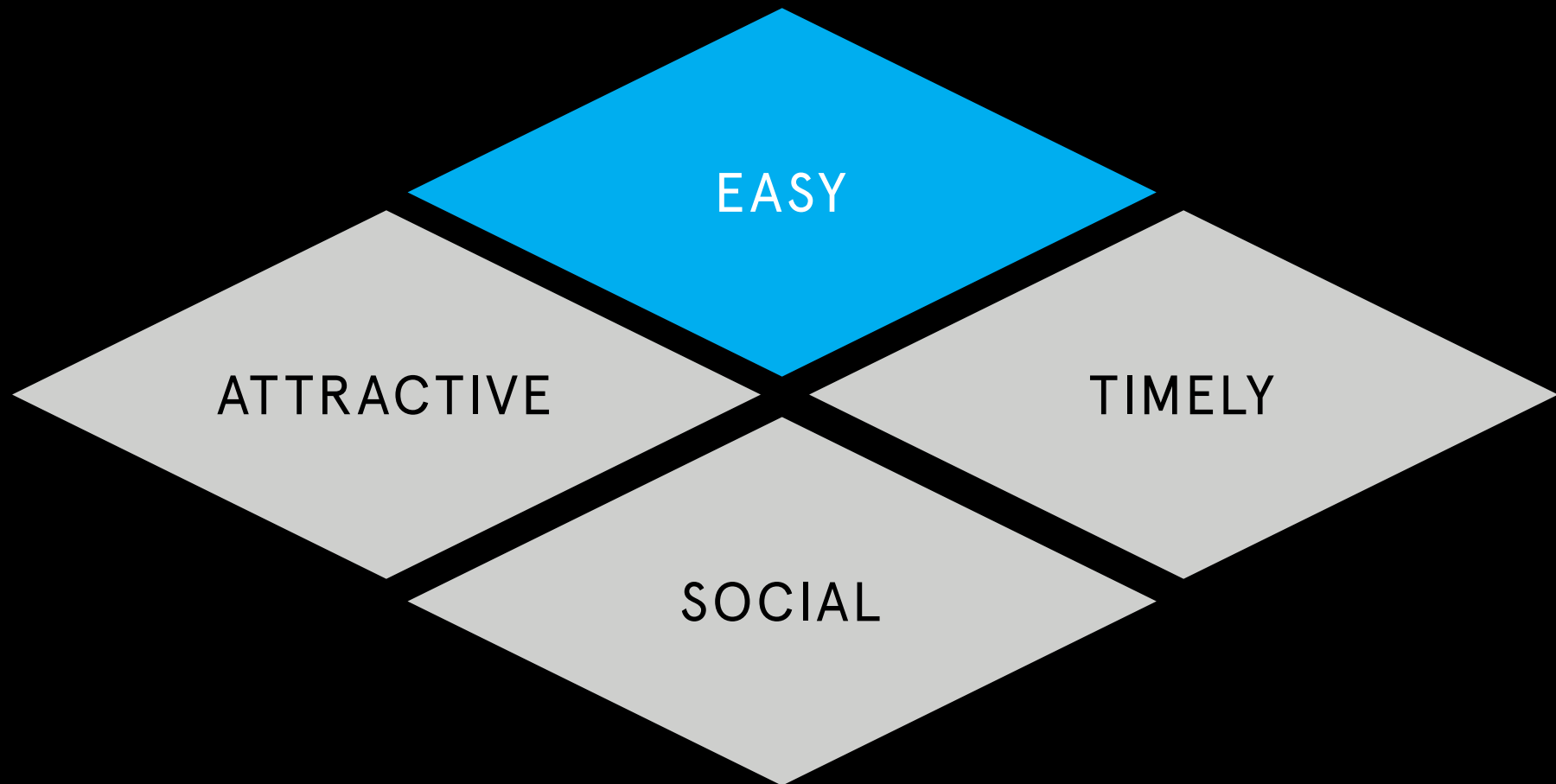
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- Using BI in policy
- Practical applications
- Memorable checklist (mnemonic)

If you want to encourage a behaviour:

- Make it Easy
- Make it Attractive
- Make it Social
- Make it Timely



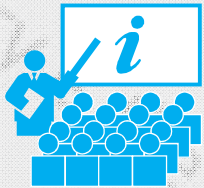
Tax



Criminal sanctions



Financial penalties



Communication

**Over 1 million people
still fail to pay tax on
time**

We ran a trial on the 'Tax Return Initiative' with HM Revenue & Customs

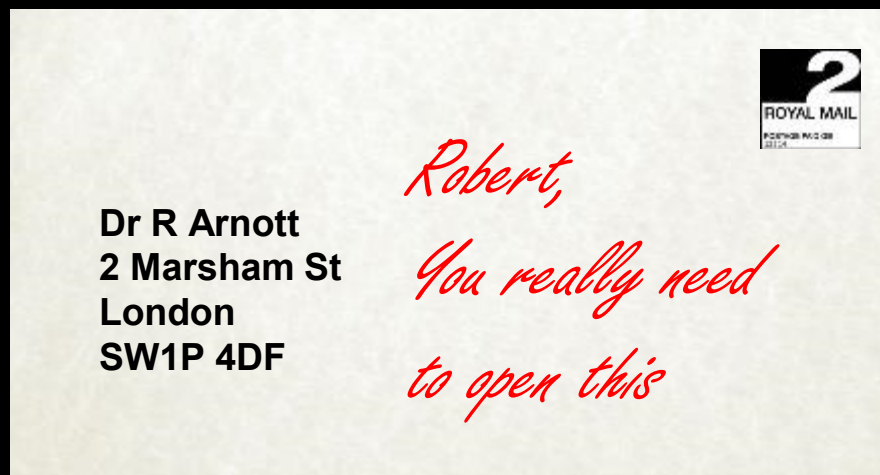
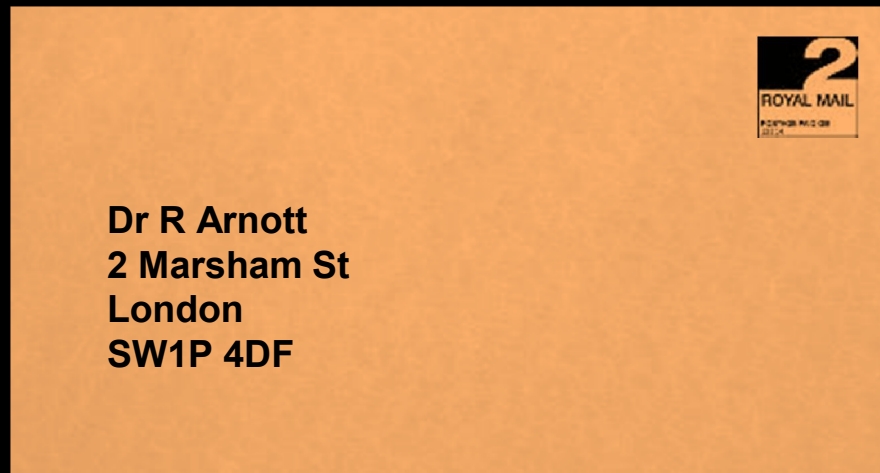
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Webpage



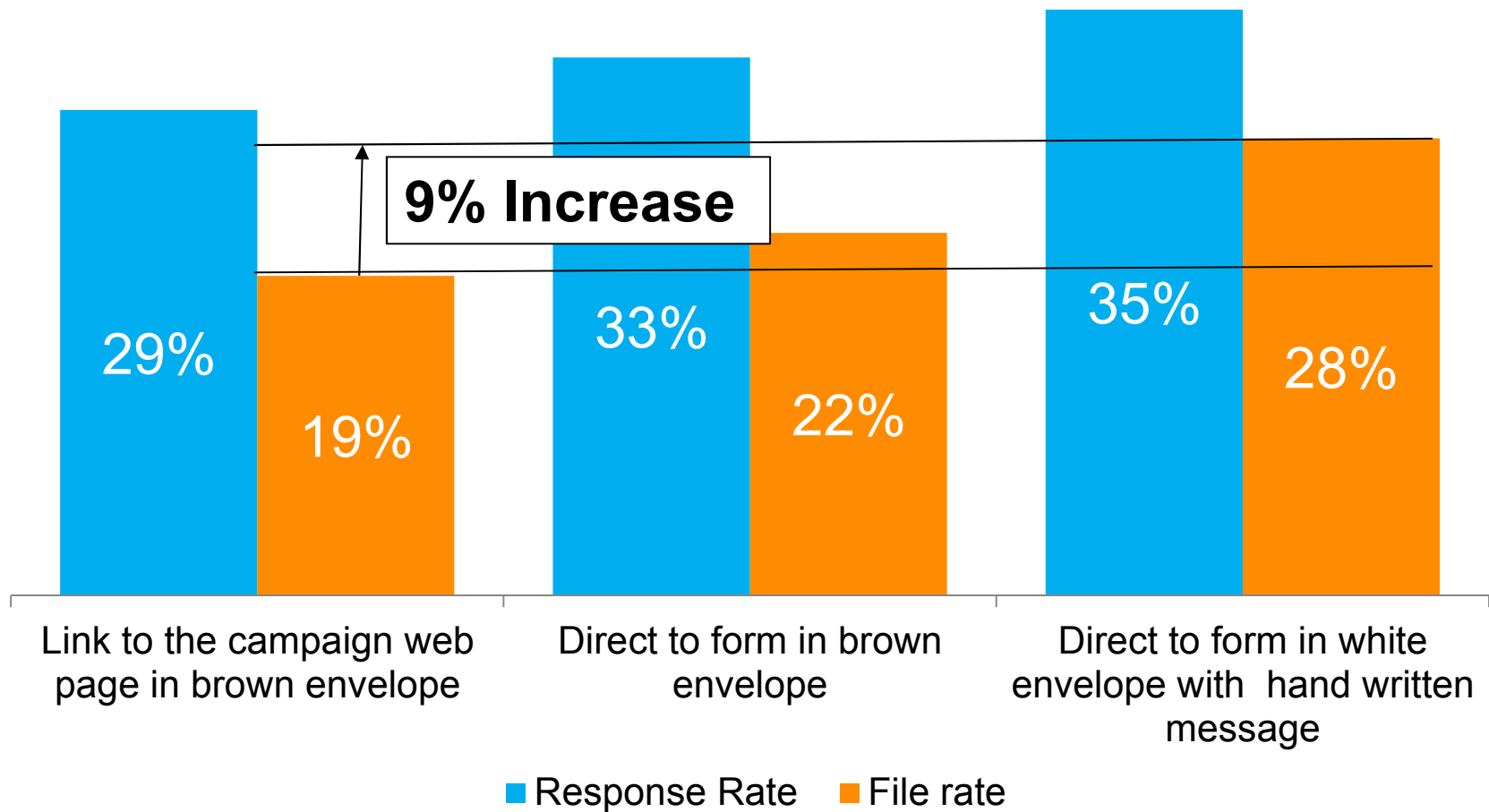
Direct to form

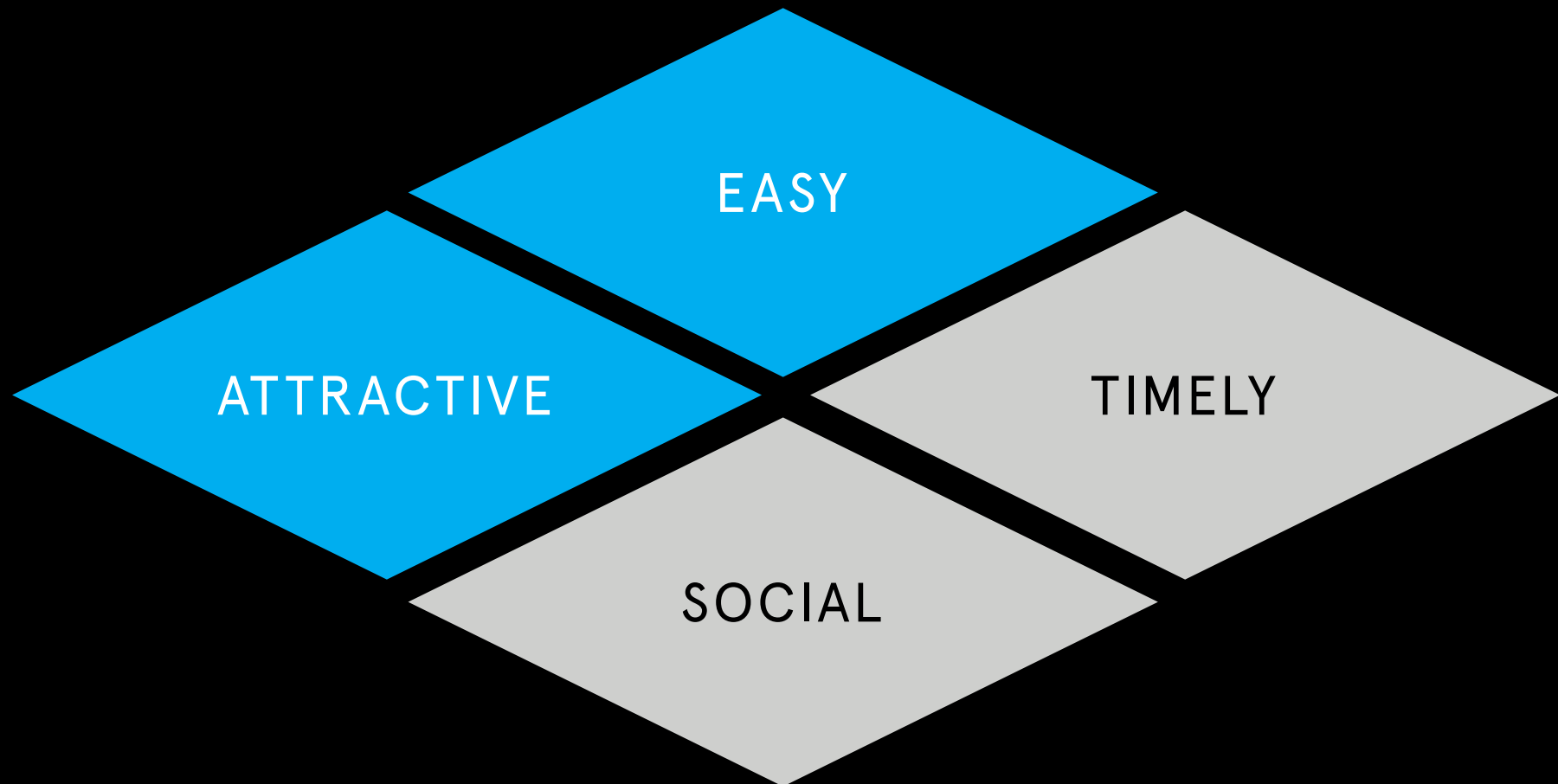




Tax trials

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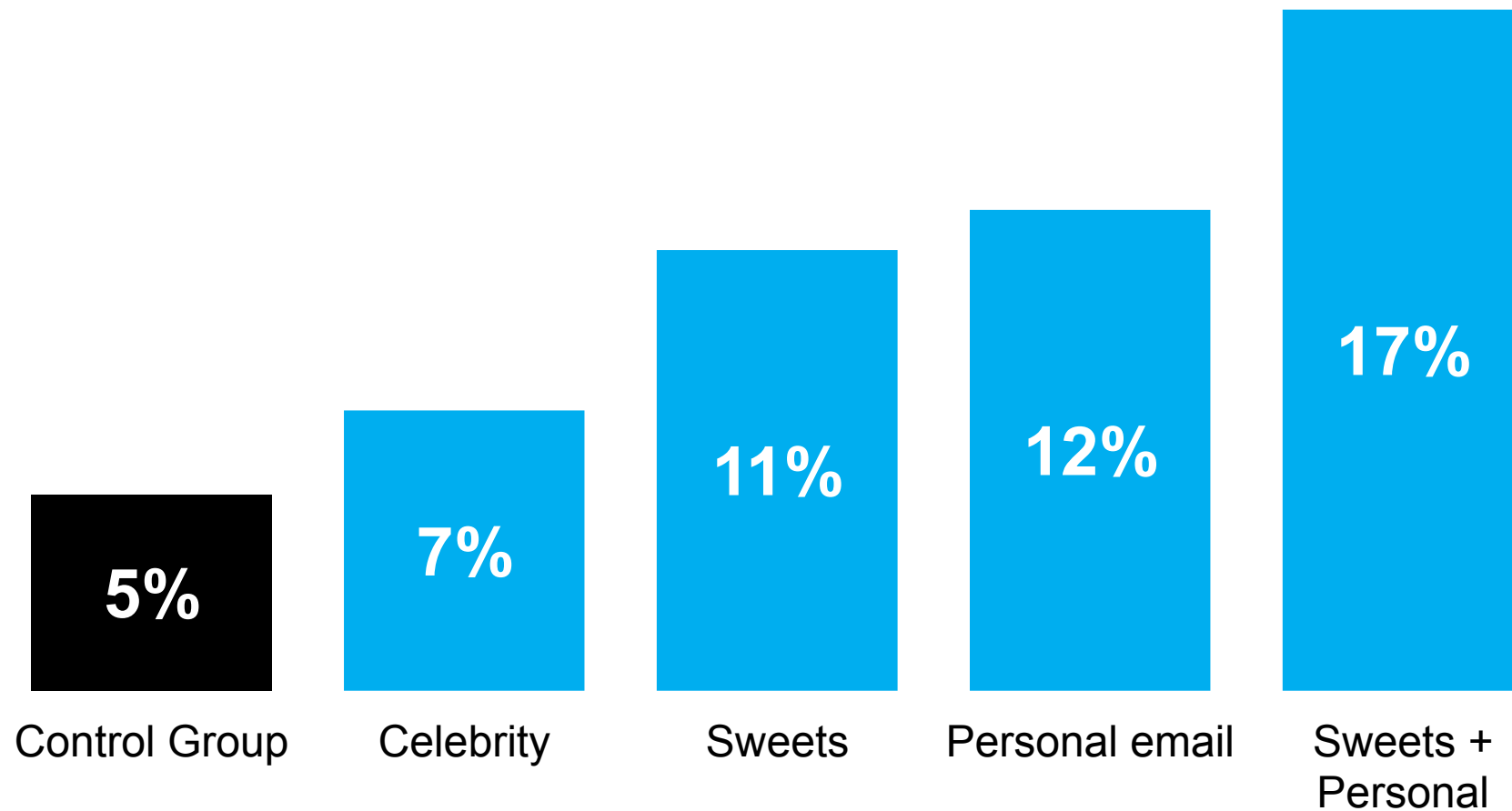
Charitable giving

What would
make you
donate a
day's pay?



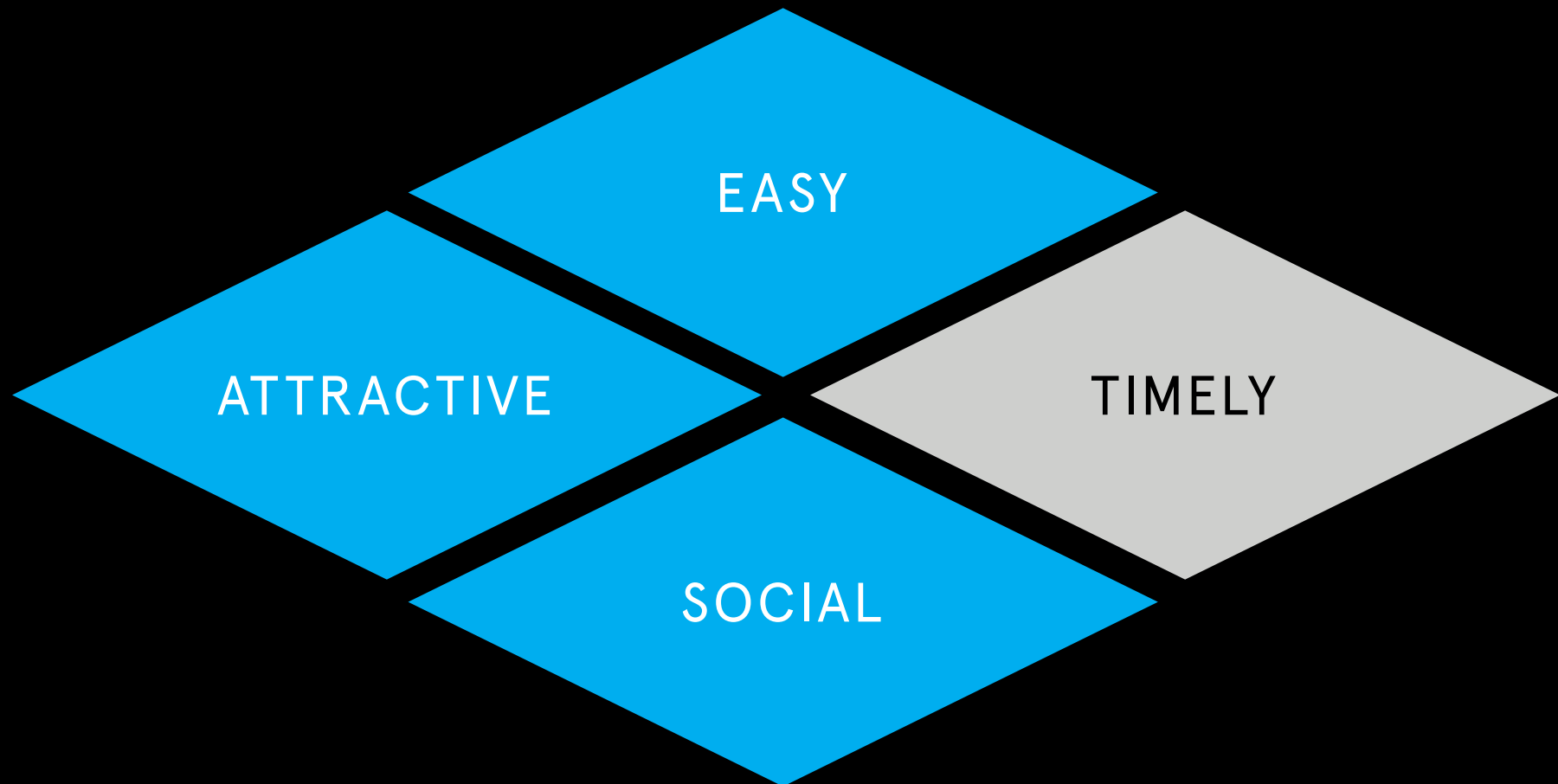
Proportion giving away a day's salary to charity

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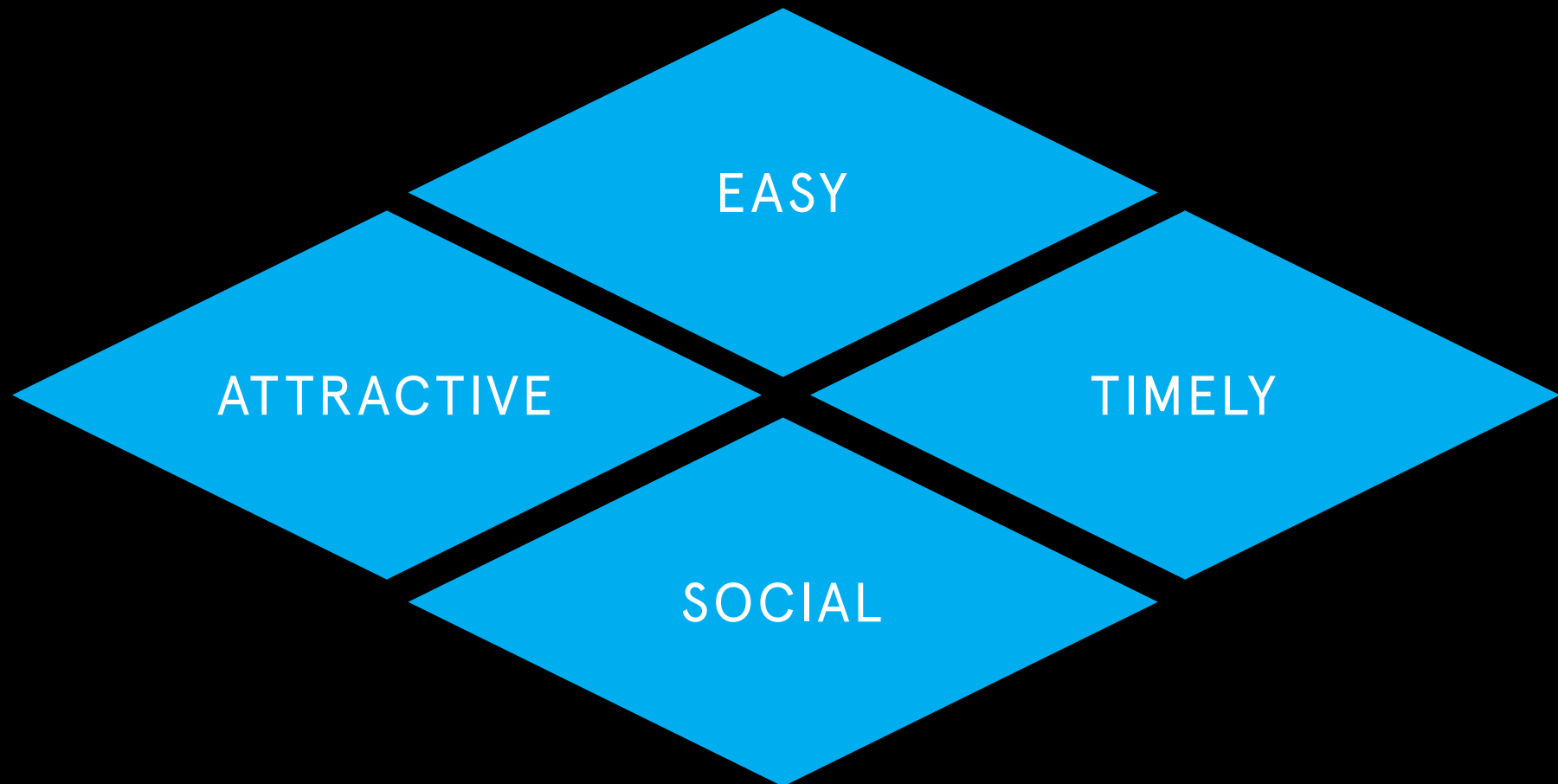


Our trial raised
£500,000 in
one day.





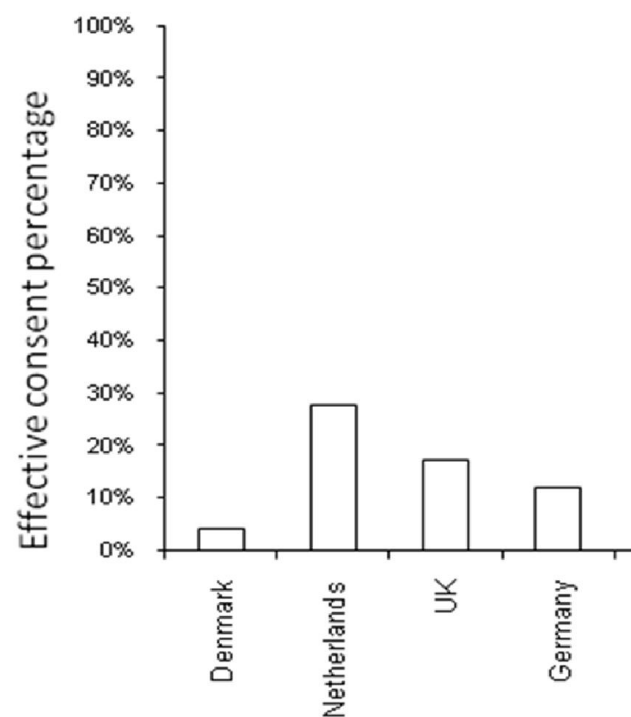
Medication adherence



Organ donation

What levers can you use to encourage organ donation?

Percentage of adults registered as organ donors



Renew a tax disc

[Make a SORN declaration](#)

[Apply for an HGV vehicle tax disc](#)

[Calculate vehicle tax rates](#)

Before you start

To apply online you'll need either:

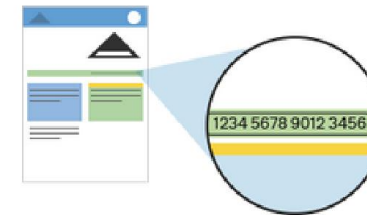
- the 16 digit reference number from your tax disc renewal letter (V11)
- the 11 digit reference number from your log book (V5C)

Apply on the DVLA website:

Apply now >

You will need

Tax disc renewal letter (V11)



Apply using the new service **BETA**

This is a 'beta' service - find out [what this means for you](#).

You'll need either:

- the 16 digit reference number from your tax disc renewal letter (V11)
- the 11 digit reference number from your log book (V5C)

Apply now

Other ways to apply

By phone

GOV.UK

Home

Service

Thank you.

Please join the NHS Organ Donor Register.

Three people die every day because there are not enough organ donors.

[Join >](#) or [find out more.](#)

1. Three die every day...

GOV.UK

Home

Service

Thank you.

Please join the NHS Organ Donor Register.

You could save or transform up to 9 lives as an organ donor.

[Join >](#) or [find out more.](#)

2. You can save nine lives...

GOV.UK

Home

Service

Thank you.

Please join the NHS Organ Donor Register.

If you needed an organ transplant would you have one? If so please help others.

[Join >](#) or [find out more.](#)

3. If you needed transplant...

GOV.UK

Home

Service

Thank you.

Please join the NHS Organ Donor Register.

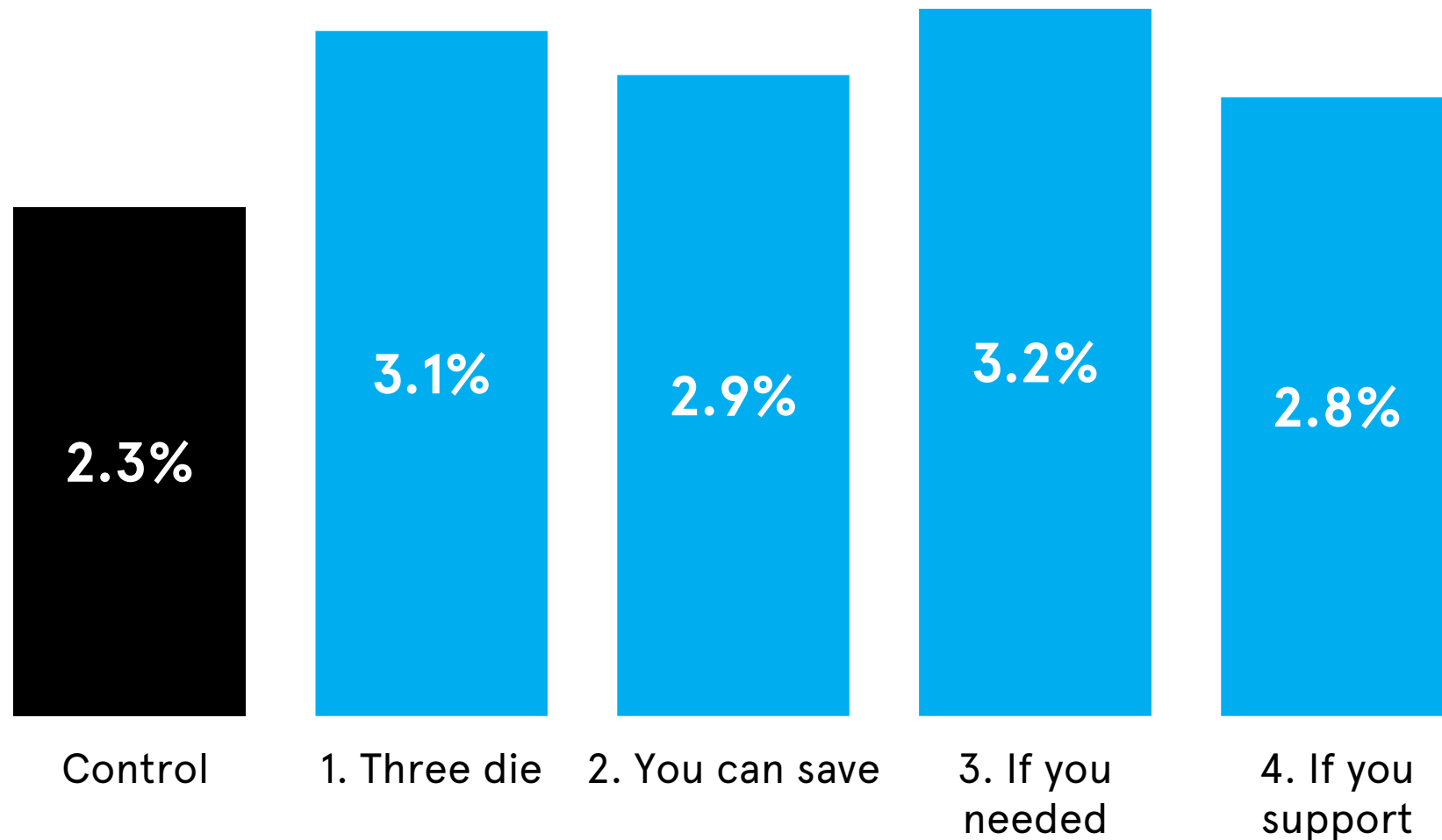
If you support organ donation please turn your support into action.

[Join >](#) or [find out more.](#)

4. If you support donation...

Proportion joining the organ donor register after a simple online prompt


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Our organ
donation trial
added
100,000
organ donor
registrations
in a year.




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Exercise: Policy challenge

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TI Summer School: Evaluation

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BIT's four-stage process for running projects

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T



Target: Define
the outcome

E



Explore:
Understand the
context

S



Solution: Build
your intervention

T



Trial: Test,
learn, adapt

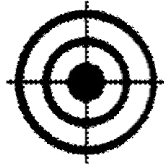
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T



Target: Define
the outcome



Target: being focused on your outcome measure is critical

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S

Specific – target a specific behaviour that you are trying to change.

M

Measurable – we want a quantifiable outcome measure

A

Assignable – specify who or what will do it

R

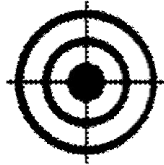
Realistic – state what results can realistically be achieved, given available resources.

T

Time-related – specify when the result(s) can be achieved.

S M A R T O U T C O M E

**REMEMBER THAT WE ARE INTERESED IN CHANGING BEHAVIOUR – NOT
ATTITUDES, NOT OPINIONS, NOT BELIEFS**



It's much more common to see these kinds of objectives in government policy

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It's not clear what improvement might mean in this context

Efficiency of what?

The objective is to: **improve** the **efficiency** of **HM Courts Service**

Is this the whole of the Courts Service, or part of it? Start small?

The aim is to concisely state what you are trying to achieve, which will help provide focus for BIT and the organisations we're working with

BIT's four-stage process for running projects

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Target: Define
the outcome

E



Explore:
Understand the
context

A Behavioural Insights Team project needs at least four components

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Target: Define the outcome

E



Explore: Understand the context

S

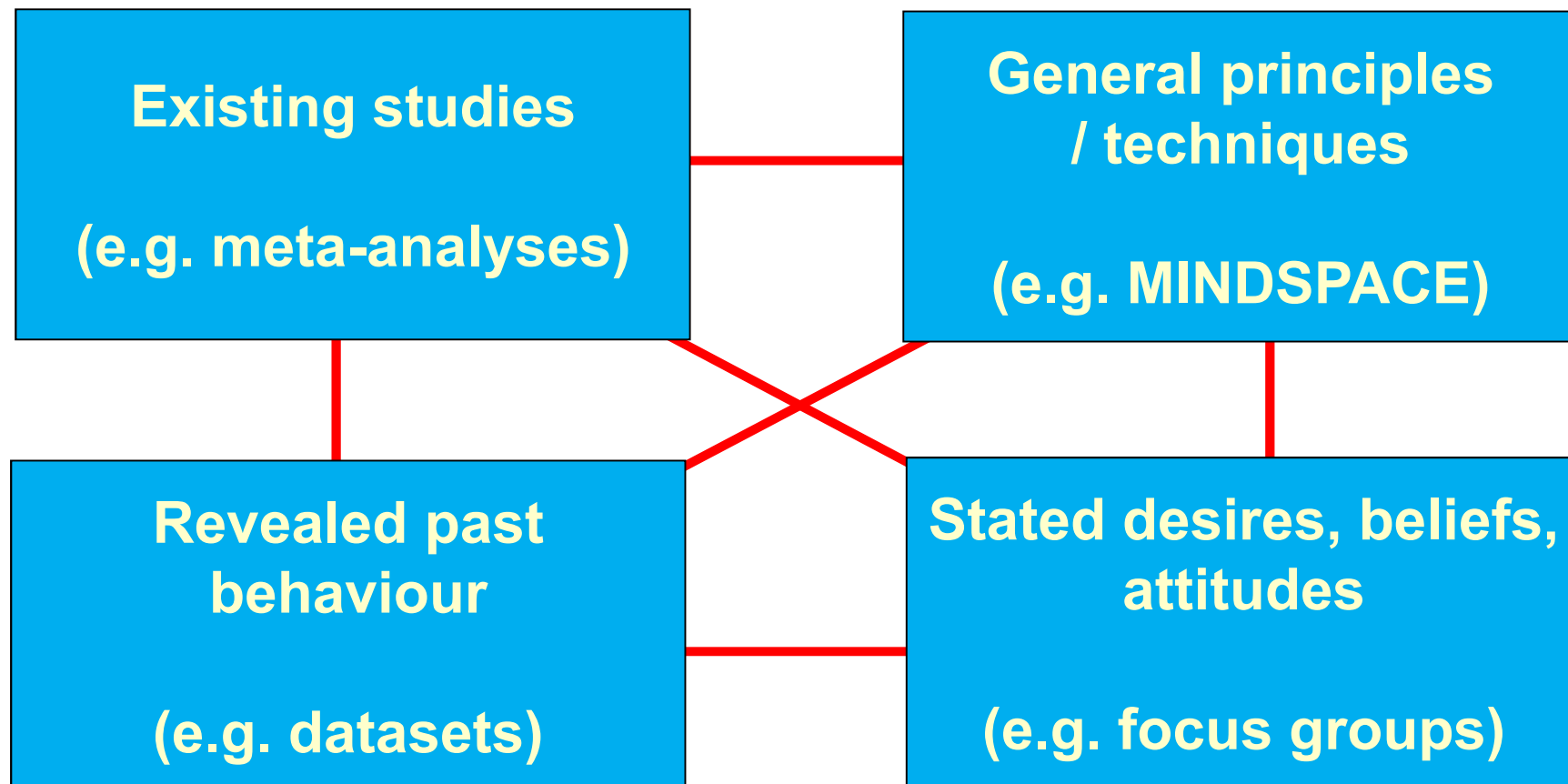


Solution: Build your intervention



Solution: Designing **solutions** requires
range of approaches

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Target: Define
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Solution: Build
your intervention

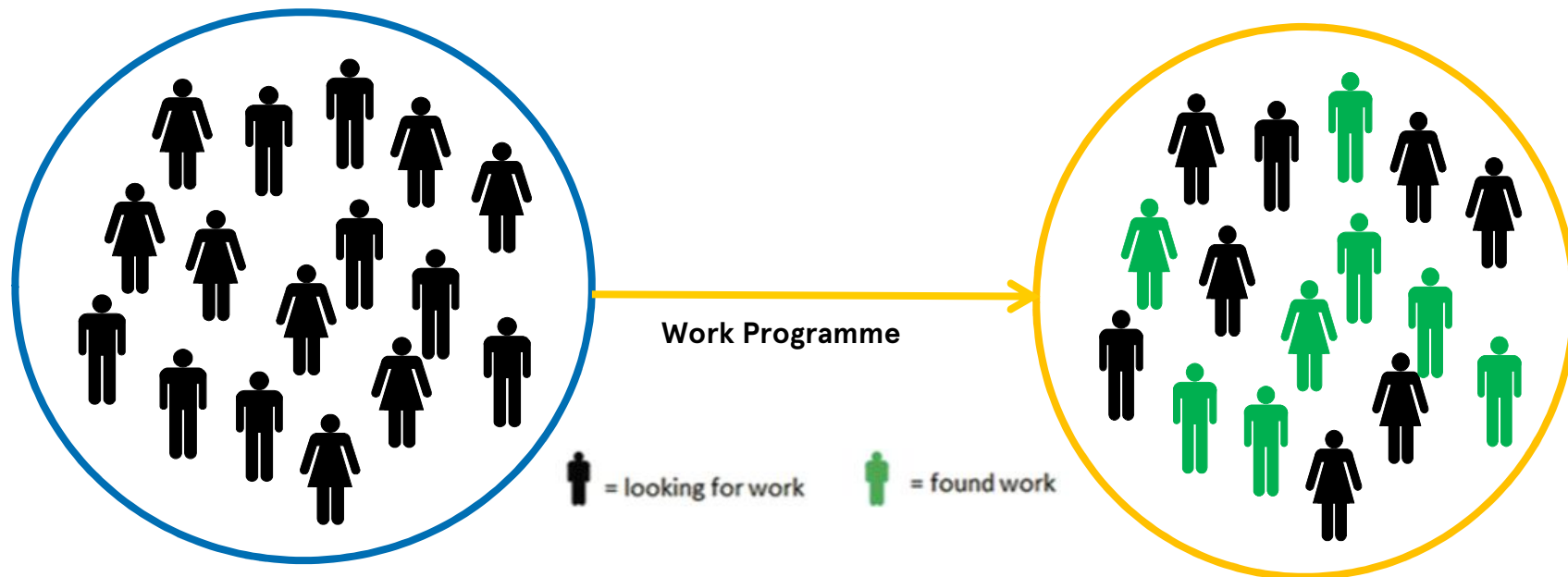
T



Trial: Test,
learn, adapt

The Evaluation Problem

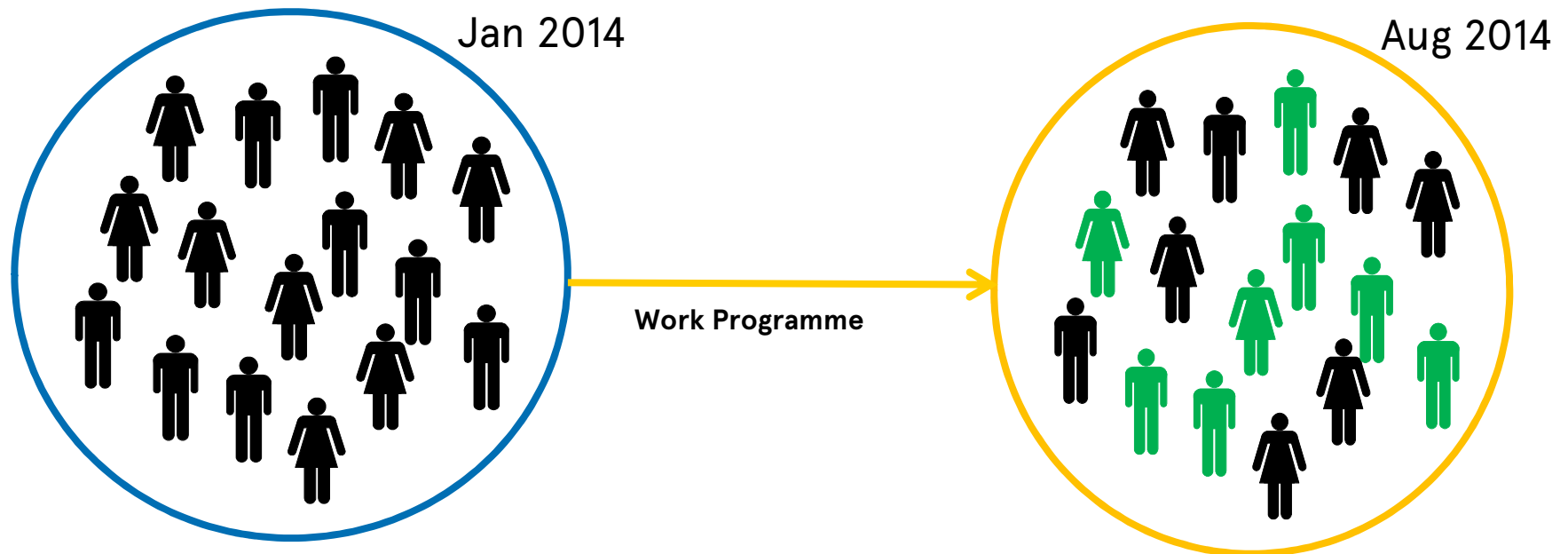
- What would have happened without our intervention?



- Important to establish a valid counterfactual

The Evaluation Problem

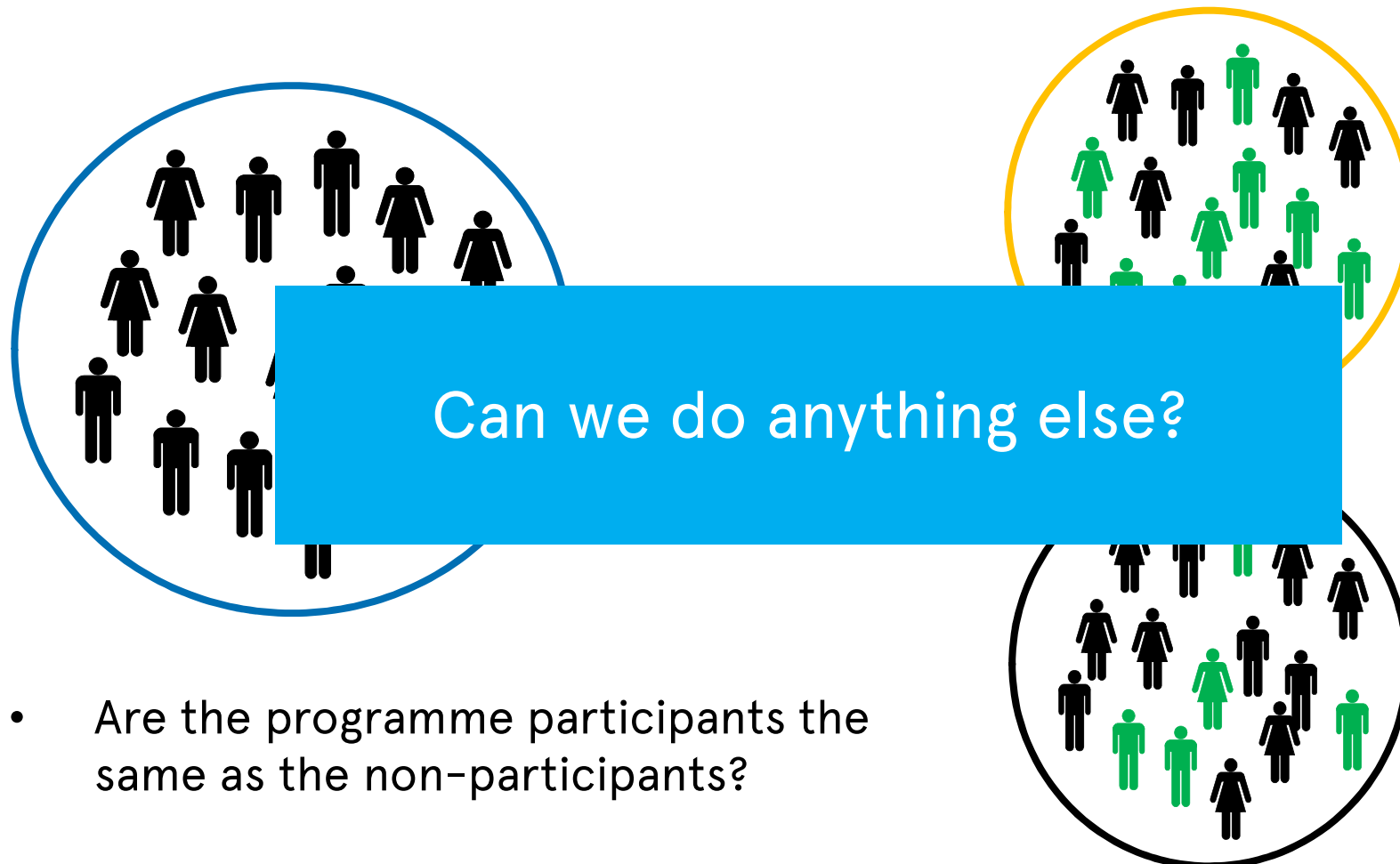
- How about before and after?



- What about external factors?

The Evaluation Problem

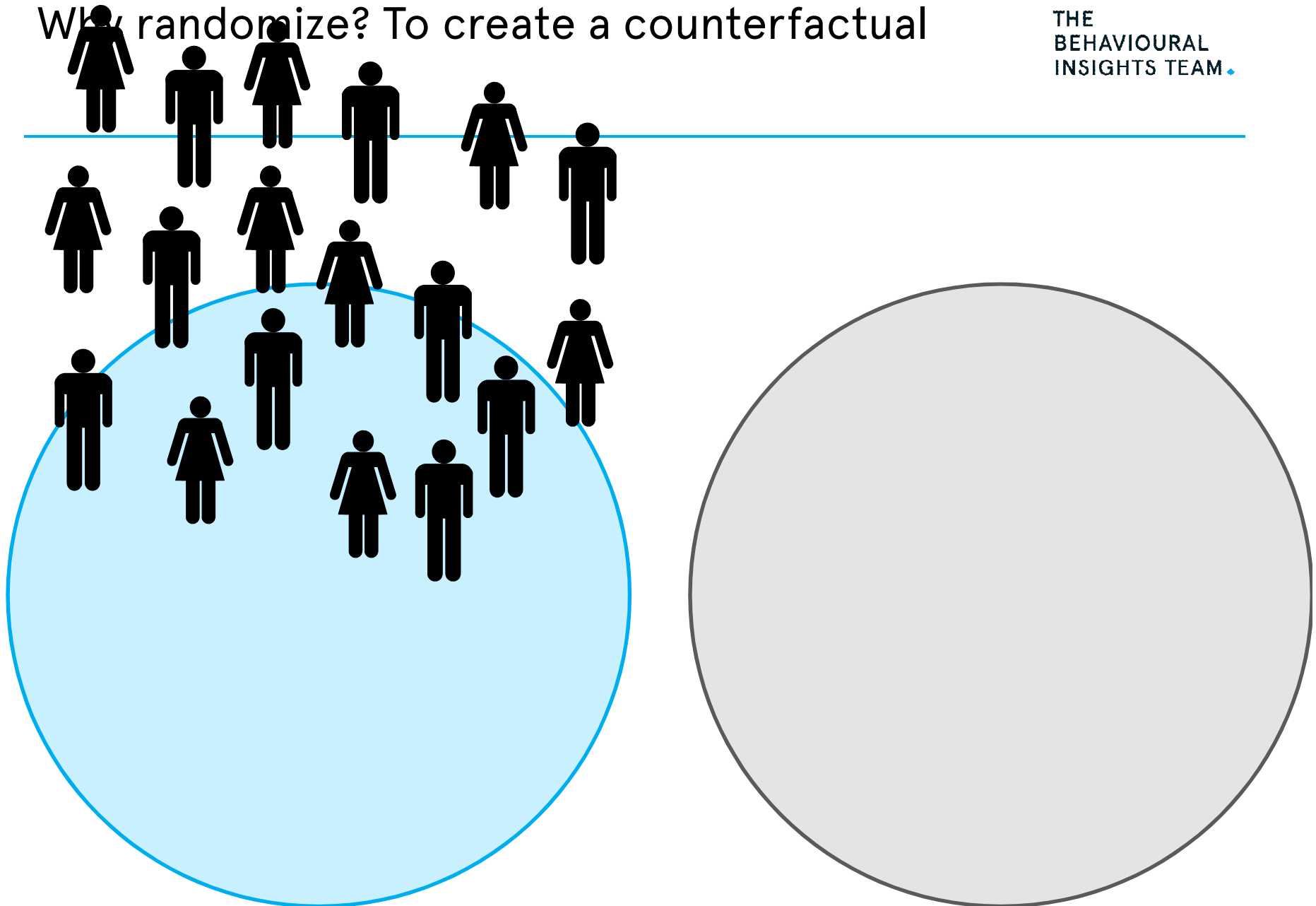
- How about comparing those inside and outside the programme?



- Are the programme participants the same as the non-participants?

Why randomize? To create a counterfactual

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Compare and contrast

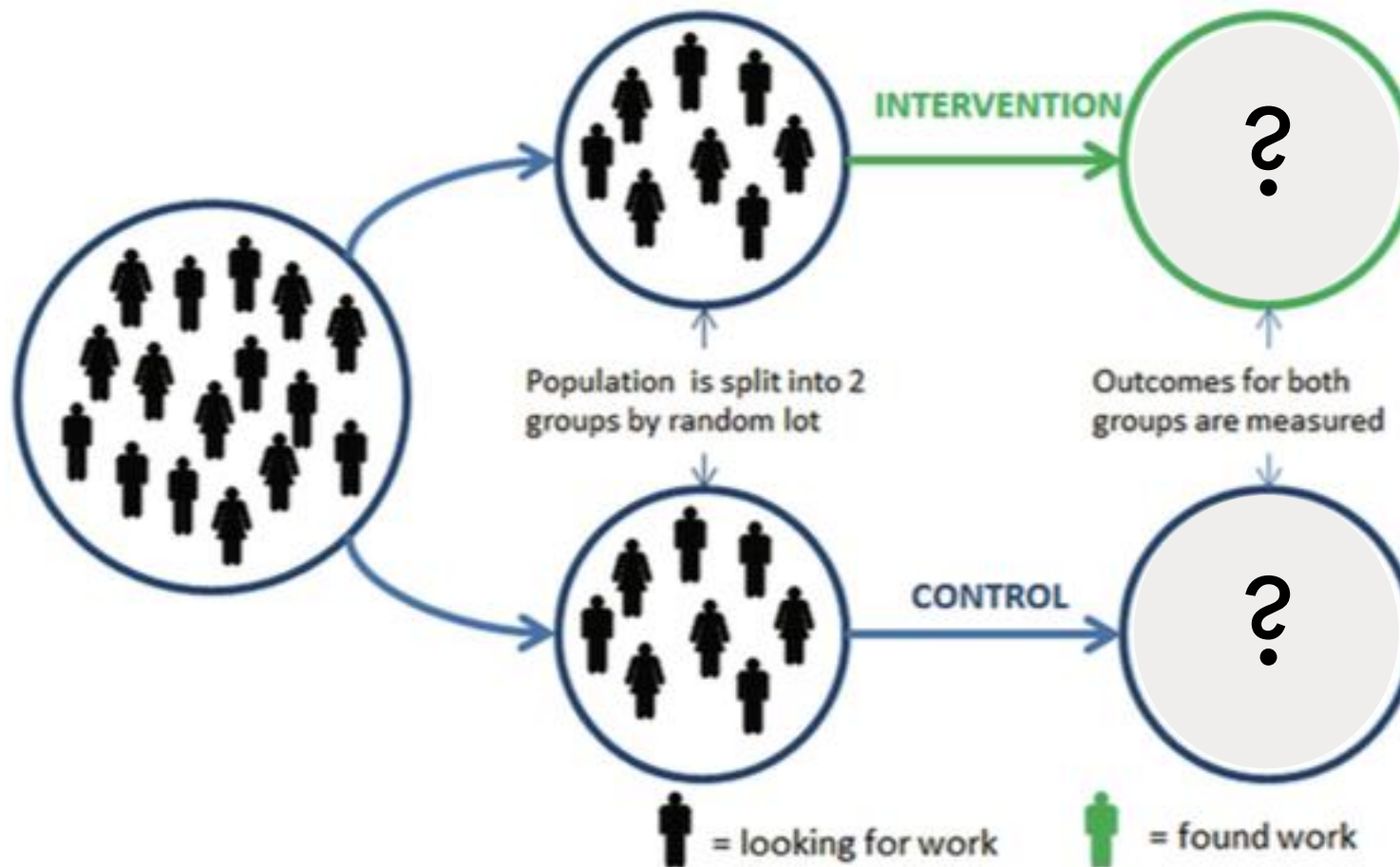


Figure 3. Illustration of a randomised controlled trial (RCT) to test a new 'back to work' programme (positive outcome).

2 people in control group found work

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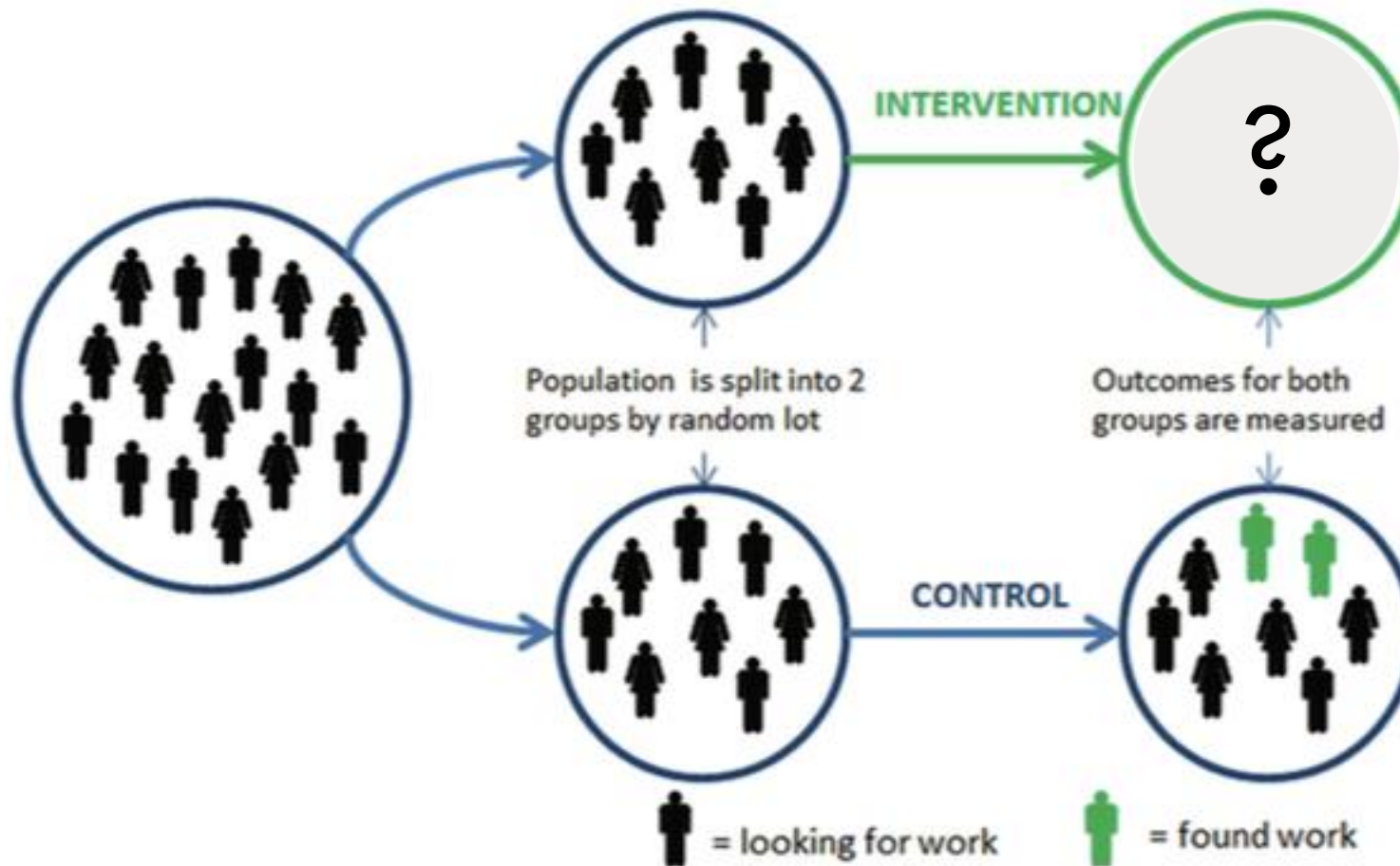


Figure 3. Illustration of a randomised controlled trial (RCT) to test a new 'back to work' programme (positive outcome).

4 is more than 2... it works

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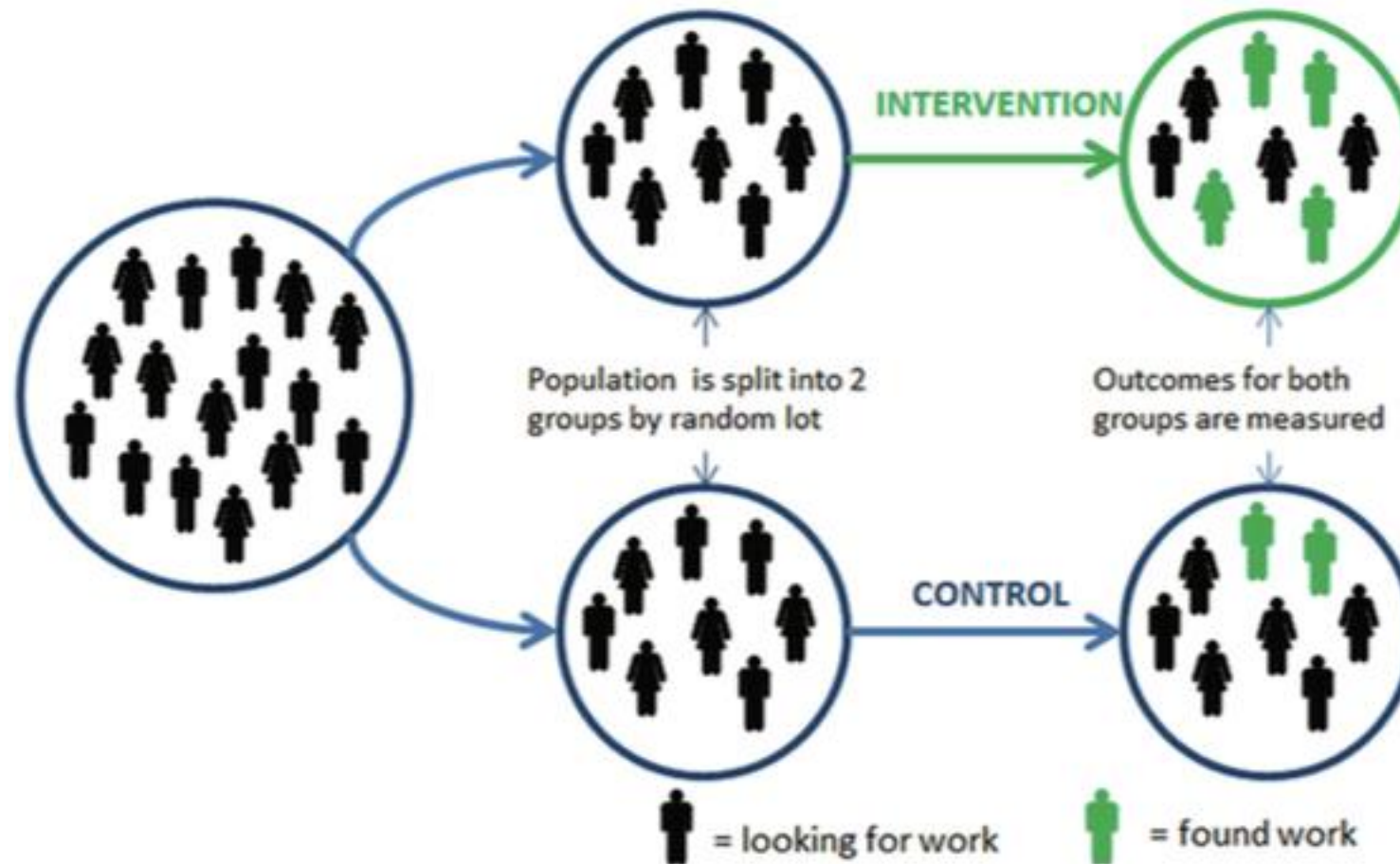


Figure 3. Illustration of a randomised controlled trial (RCT) to test a new 'back to work' programme (positive outcome).

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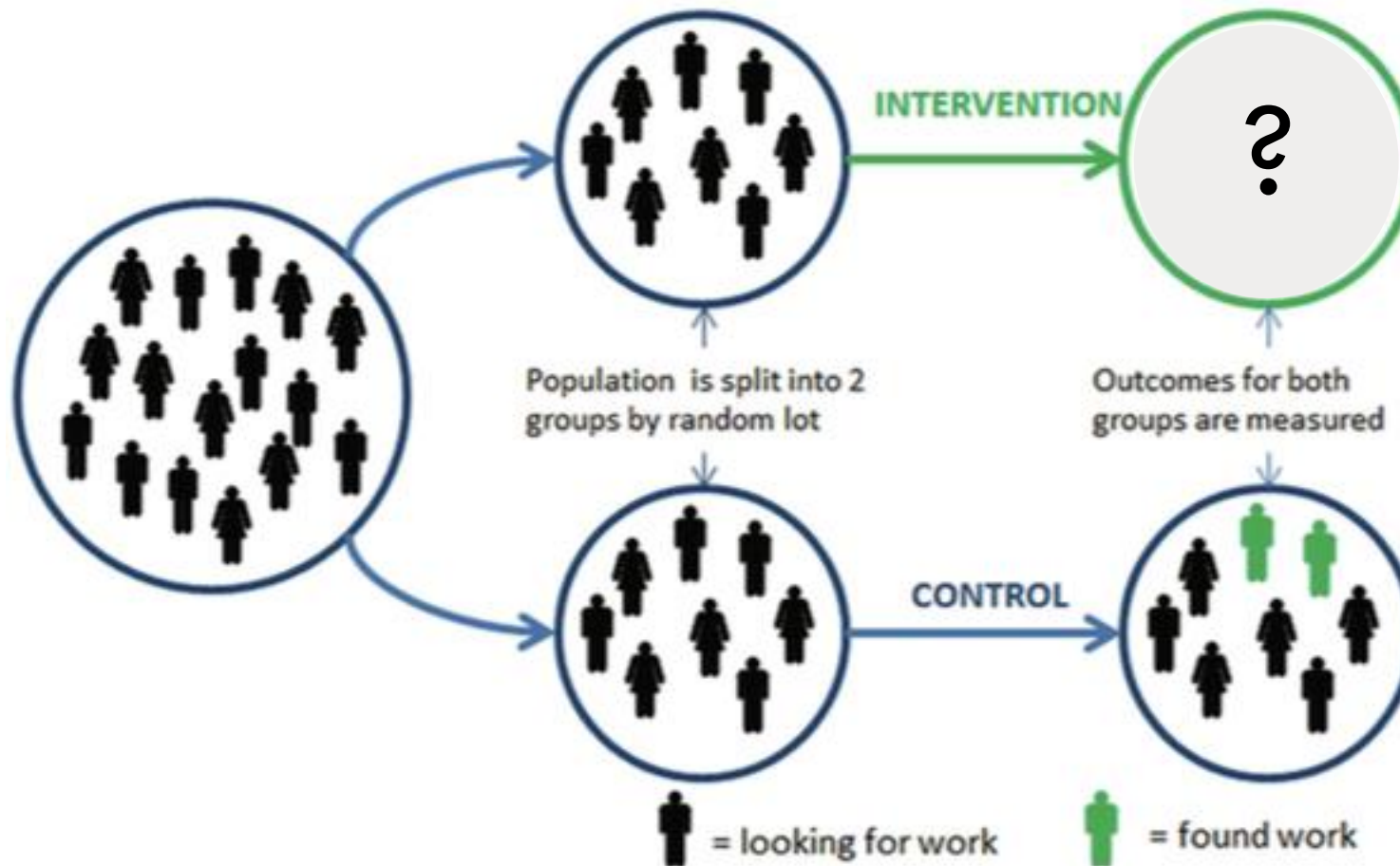


Figure 3. Illustration of a randomised controlled trial (RCT) to test a new 'back to work' programme (positive outcome).

2 is the same as 2... programme is ineffective

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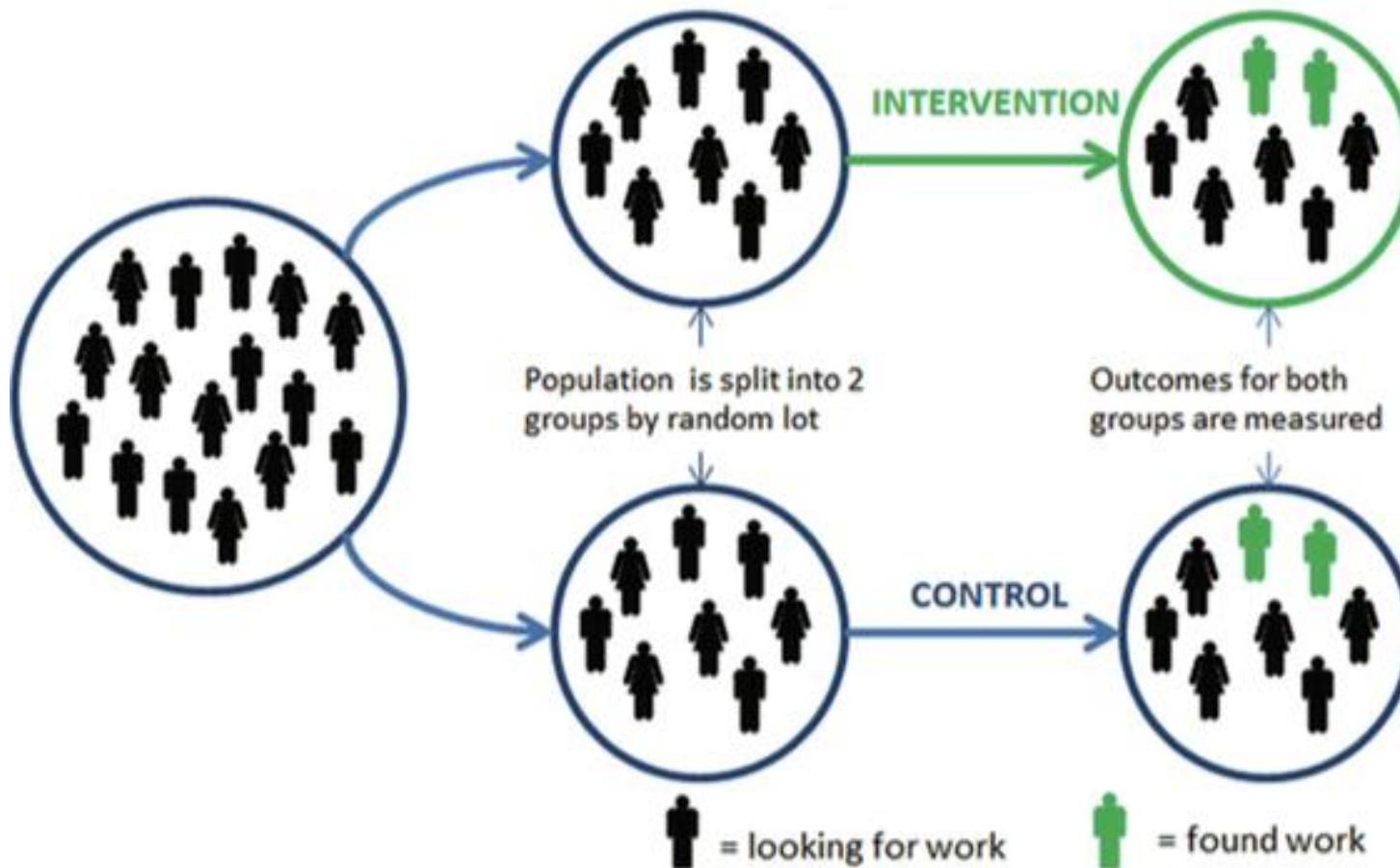


Figure 4. Illustration of a randomised controlled trial (RCT) to test a new 'back to work' programme (neutral outcome).

1. Pointless, we know what works
2. Expensive
3. Unethical
4. Difficult to Run



Myth 1. We know what works: Scared Straight

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- Young offenders visit inmates, observe first-hand prison life
- Rolled out to 30 jurisdictions in the US then UK, Germany, Canada....



Myth 1. We know what works: Scared Straight

- **1979** TV Study found that 16/17 delinquents were law-abiding for 3 months
- **1999** Followed up found that 10/12 remained offence free

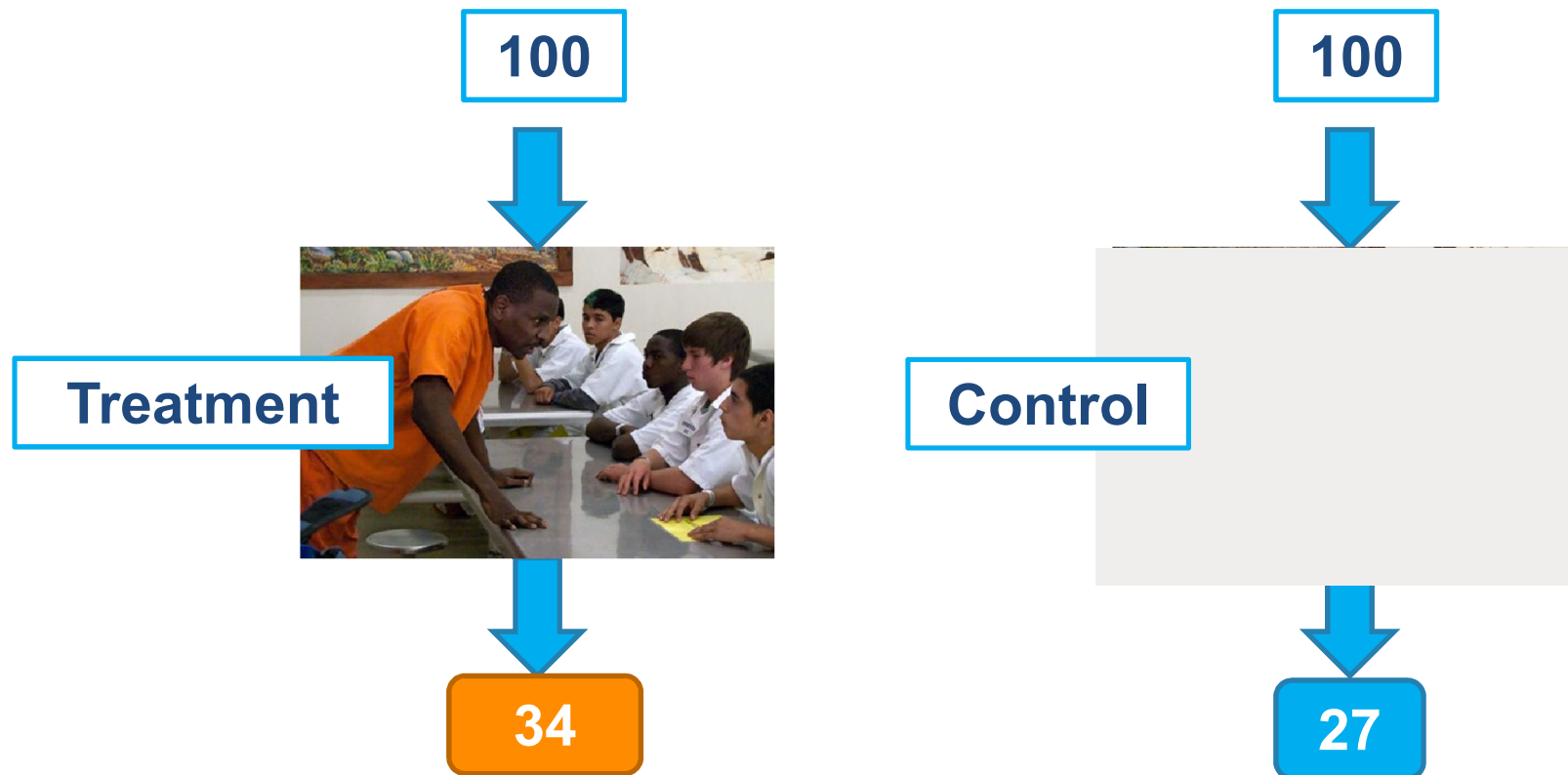
Convincing?

- Anecdotal, correlational, small sample studies
- Tendency to look only at the success stories...

Myth 1. We know what works: Scared Straight

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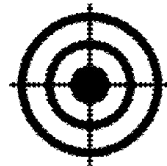
Campbell Review: 7 trials with control and treatment group



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T



Target: Define
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Explore:
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Trial: Test,
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Exercise: Designing a trial

Task – Design a trial

-
- **Your task:**
 - Pick one of your intervention ideas
 - Design a project using the TEST framework
 - Make it an RCT
 - Present it to the group (1 min)
 - You have 20 mins!

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Applying to corruption

Possible avenues in corruption

- Opportunistic corruption (marginal offenders)
- Encourage whistleblowing
 - Flip the default
 - Chunking
- Lottery auditing
- Making corruption harder to commit: e-governance, cash free hospitals
- Making refusing corruption easier, e.g. zero rupee notes, timely provision of rights

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Questions?



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