MEANINGFUL WORK SUPPORT STRATEGIES

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A PUZZLE:
CONNECT THE TWO RINGS
SOLUTIONS COMES FROM OUR REPRESENTATION OF PROBLEMS

HARD PROBLEM

• 2 steel rings
• Matchbook
• Candle
HOW DO WE SEE THE POPULATIONS WE SERVE?

“What happens to me in the future mostly depends on me.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reporting “Agree” or “Strongly Agree”</th>
<th>Predicted</th>
<th>Actual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Middle and Upper Income</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Income</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
HOW DO WE REPRESENT PEOPLE?

...odd choice.
BEHAVIORAL ECONOMICS AND POVERTY
How clean your apartment is

How much real work you're supposed to be doing

www.phdcomics.com
Scarcity creates goal inhibition and tunneling on immediate goal.

- “I need to…”
  - “...feed my family now.”
  - “...repair my car now.”
  - “...pay my rent now.”
Imagine that your car has some trouble, which requires **a $300 service**. Your auto insurance will cover half the cost. You need to decide whether to go ahead and get the car fixed, or take a chance and hope that it lasts for a while longer. How would you go about making such a decision?

Financially, would it be an easy or a difficult decision for you to make?

Imagine that your car has some trouble, which requires **an expensive $3,000 service**. Your auto insurance will cover half the cost. You need to decide whether to go ahead and get the car fixed, or take a chance and hope that it lasts for a while longer. How would you go about making such a decision?

Financially, would it be an easy or a difficult decision for you to make?
COGNITIVE PERFORMANCE AND FINANCIAL STRESS

Above Median Income

Below Median Income

Worse than losing a whole night’s sleep

Easy (cheap)

Hard (Expensive)
Erynn Brook @ErynnBrook · May 15

Everyone I’ve ever talked to who has been poor and is not anymore has the same story of the moment they realized they weren’t poor anymore: grocery shopping.

658 6.7K 30K

Erynn Brook @ErynnBrook · May 15

Either at the checkout or in the aisles. I had this moment. I remember it clearly. Mine came when I was loading my groceries onto the cashier belt and I realized I didn’t do the math.

29 214 3.2K

Erynn Brook @ErynnBrook · May 15

When I was poor grocery shopping was complex math, holding numbers in my head, constantly remembering pre and post tax prices for the things in my basket, combined with survival math like “if I go to bed before the hunger hits then half a bagel is enough for dinner.”

48 352 4.1K
DESIGNING EFFECTIVE PROGRAMS
THE DESIGN PRINCIPLES

Cut the costs

Create slack

Reframe and empower
EXAMPLE: MICHIGAN WORKS! REA PROGRAM

REA programs have been shown to work, but the Michigan Works! Southwest Reemployment and Eligibility Assessment (REA) pilot program was facing a problem with program take-up among unemployment insurance (UI) claimants:

About 25 claimants were selected each week to participate

Less than 50 percent of selected claimants scheduled their first session
Subject: Schedule your Michigan Works assessment
Short preview: Your personalized Reemployment and Eligibility Assessment

Dear [first name],

Hi, I’m Darlene at Michigan Works Southwest. Soon, you will receive a letter from the Unemployment Insurance Agency asking you to schedule a Reemployment and Eligibility Assessment within 14 days. The Michigan Unemployment Insurance Agency requires your participation in REA to continue unemployment benefits, but we at Michigan Works Southwest view REA as an opportunity to help you get back to work.

Please call me at [phone number] for Kalamazoo, [phone number] for Three Rivers, or [phone number] for Branch and Calhoun counties (whichever office is more convenient for you) as soon as possible to schedule your Reemployment and Eligibility Assessment.

We will work with you one-on-one to help you get reemployed in a good job. We can provide a variety of effective reemployment services at no cost to you. All our services are always provided free. We look forward to meeting you soon.

Sincerely,
Darlene, REA Coordinator

What to Do Next:

1. Call me today at [phone number] (Kalamazoo), [phone number] (Three Rivers), or [phone number] (Branch and Calhoun) to schedule your REA appointment. I can be reached during regular business hours, Monday through Friday.

2. Bring the following materials to your appointment:
   - Your government issued photo identification.
   - Your recent monthly record of work search (UMA form 1583).
   - Your resume (if you don’t have one, we can help you write one).

3. Come to your appointment at one of the following locations:
   - Michigan Works
     1501 C. Burdick Street
     Kalamazoo, MI 49001
   - Michigan Works
     16097 Enterprise Dr. #5
     Three Rivers, MI 49093
   - Michigan Works
     210 Vista Drive
     Coldwater, MI 49036
   - Michigan Works
     135 Huron Avenue
     Battle Creek, MI 49017
BIG EFFECTS ON REA SIGN UP AND COMPLETION

Scheduling rates

Completion rates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Email recipients</th>
<th>No email (business as usual)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>70.4%</td>
<td>15.2%**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55.2%</td>
<td>13.8%**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentage of study participants