PURPOSE / TABLE OF CONTENTS
To discuss how knowledge and methodologies from behavioural sciences can help combat distracted driving.

1. Behavioural Science 101
   How do more sophisticated understandings of human behaviour improve outcomes?

2. Using Behavioural Science to Understand Distracted Driving
   How can using a behavioural lens inform our understanding of distracted driving?

3. A Behavioural Approach to Combatting Distracted Driving
   How do safe driving apps help overcome our behavioural biases? How can we encourage use of these apps?

4. Ontario’s BIU
   Who are we, and what do we do?
1. BEHAVIOURAL SCIENCE 101
In order to decide whether…

- to stay in school;
- to eat a healthy diet;
- to save for retirement, etc.

But often, we don’t have the…

- Time;
- Memory;
- Awareness;
- Ability; or
- Motivation to engage in a complex cost-benefit analysis

Instead, much of our behaviour is guided by autopilot.
WE ARE OF TWO MINDS

System 1 (automatic)

- Ancient, instinctual brain
- Fast
- Effortless
- Mental shortcuts

System 2 (deliberative)

- Flexible
- Capable of…
  - abstract and rational thought
  - thinking about the future
  - controlling system 1

Weaknesses

- Focussed on the present
- Emotional
- Stereotypes
- Impulsive

- Slow
- Effortful
- Easily fatigued
- Limited capacity

Strengths

Ancient, instinctual brain
Fast
Effortless
Mental shortcuts
DESIGNING SERVICES WITH AUTOPILOT IN MIND

Two broad solutions:

1. Encourage people to switch off autopilot and think their decision through
2. Shape the environment to help steer autopilot in the right direction

Reduced collisions by 36%
2. USING BEHAVIOURAL SCIENCE TO UNDERSTAND DISTRACTED DRIVING
Distracted driving is the leading cause of fatalities on the road

- **Distracted driving** is the leading cause of fatalities on Ontario’s roads.¹

- Since 2000 the number of vehicular deaths in which distracted driving was a contributing factor have doubled.²

  — **One person** is **injured** in a distracted-driving collision **every half hour**.²

- **A driver using a phone is four times more likely** to **crash** than a driver focusing on the road.²,³

- Collisions due to inattentive driving are on the rise and far surpass those due to alcohol consumption⁴

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² Ontario government collisions data, retrieved from [https://www.ontario.ca/page/distracted-driving](https://www.ontario.ca/page/distracted-driving)


In one study, two-thirds of participants agreed that speeding is not worth the risks and is **not acceptable**. Yet...

- **More than half (58.4%) admitted to exceeding** a 100km/h **speed limit**, with one third admitting they do so by 10-20km/h.¹

Most young drivers believe texting while driving is dangerous, distracting, and should be illegal. Yet...

- **91%** of these same young drivers **reported they have texto** texted while driving
- **40%** have had texting arguments while driving, **40%** report **simultaneously texting, eating, and driving.²**

**If people know distracted driving is dangerous, why is this behaviour so prevalent?**

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BEHAVIOURAL BARRIERS HELP EXPLAIN THE INTENTION-ACTION GAP

Phone use while driving

Key Focus

- Present Bias
- Illusory Superiority
- Optimism Bias
- Social Norms
- Habit/Status Quo
- Social Pressure
- Inattention Blindness
- Withdrawal Symptoms
Drivers are susceptible to present bias, seeking the immediate gratification of checking their phone, and are less influenced by potential future risks of that behaviour.

Evidence suggests that present bias and impulsivity are factors that influence whether individuals will use their phone when driving.

- In one study, young drivers who were unwilling to delay gratification were more likely to report texting while driving. Drivers who chose a smaller monetary reward that they would receive immediately (rather than a larger monetary reward they would receive after a delay) were more likely to say they had used their phone while driving.¹

- Another study found that the length of time before the end of the drive influenced whether young drivers used their phone while driving. Drivers were more likely to text a friend back while driving if the duration of the remaining trip was longer rather than shorter, suggesting they weigh present benefits over potentially negative future outcomes.²

Removing the tempting alert that leads to present-biased phone checking behaviour could be a strategy to limit mobile phone use while driving.

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3. A BEHAVIOURAL APPROACH TO COMBATTING DISTRACTED DRIVING
A PHONE ALERT IS LIKE ANY OTHER TEMPTATION: AVOIDANCE MAY BE THE BEST STRATEGY

The automatic “System 1” brain, susceptible to present bias, does not fully account for the costs of distracted driving, particularly when faced with the immediate gratification of a mobile phone alert / task.

Relying on people’s self-control to avoid a tempting alert on their phone may not be the best option. Eliminating the temptation entirely would be more effective, particularly if you can engage the driver’s “System 2” brain, which thinks critically about one’s actions.

People have been creating temptation avoidance strategies for millennia, recognize their value, and are even willing to pay for them.
A BI approach can increase downloads of safe driving apps

Nudge #1: Communications & Incentives to Promote Download

- Help close gaps in awareness (promotion) and action (downloads) to increase user adoption of existing safe driving apps.

Nudge #2: Safe Driving App

- Eliminate drivers’ temptation to interact with their mobile device while driving.

Getting the “right information” to people at the “right time”, through the “right channels”.

Opportunity for road safety organizations.

A number of these apps already exist.
4. ONTARIO’S BIU
WHY BEHAVIOURAL SCIENCE?

Behavioural Insights is a timely response to pressures and trends, such as the push for cost savings, human-centric design, and evidence-based decision making.

Governments are experiencing a stronger push for evidence-based decision making – and managing investment risk – from both internal and external stakeholders.

Governments are expected to do more with less, and get better value for the money that they are spending.

Governments are recognizing that human behaviour is complex; a better understanding of human behaviour leads to new tools that, as demonstrated by other jurisdictions, can improve outcomes for a low cost.

Emerging Policy / Program Knowledge

Evidence & Outcomes Measurement

Cost Savings

Behavioural Insights tells us that low-touch interventions can have outsize effects – generating evidence, cost savings and policy / program results.

Emerging Policy / Program Knowledge
THE ONTARIO BEHAVIOURAL INSIGHTS UNIT
The BIU is comprised of experts in behavioural sciences, government and project delivery.

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Ontario’s Behavioural Insights Unit is happy to come and speak with your leadership and staff about potential opportunities to collaborate.

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