

ATTENDING APPOINTMENT RESISTANCE - LITERATURE REVIEW

Communicate the right social norms

Behavioural scientists have found that one of the most effective tools for spurring behaviour is 'consensus messaging', which taps into people's tendency to follow social norms and rules.

For example, don't advertise how many people fail to attend: this promotes unhealthy behaviours. Instead reinforce how many people found employment after doing the PARC assessment over the phone, in letters, texts or on posters in the employment offices. So in Australia we can categorically state that "This survey improves your chances by 54% of being in work in 6 months' time"...or "Attending this training means that you're twice as likely to stay in your new job for more than 3 months."

Remember, "labelling" someone as "late" or "messy" makes them more likely to be late or messy. Positive labelling has the same, positive effect.

Ask the client to make a verbal or written commitment to attending.

A common finding from previous persuasion research shows that a commitment to action can be strengthened by the individual writing the appointment down themselves, either on your system or you wait whilst they write it in their smartphone, diary or wall calendar.

NHS Bedford tested ways of encouraging people (nudge) to attend their appointments without resorting to heavy handed punishments. A variety of methods were employed, including:

- prompting patients to verbally repeat the time and date of their appointment to staff;
- asking patients rather than the nurse to complete the appointment card (active commitment); and
- using a normative message that indicated the number of patients who usually turned up promptly to their appointments.

DNAs reduced by 11% following the prompt, by 18% following the active commitment, and by 31% when the active commitment was combined with the normative message. (*BIT/ Influence at Work*)

Communicate positively - rather than talking about what the job seeker will lose if they don't attend, **focus on what they will gain from attending** - assistance, support etc. Long term jobseekers becoming resistant to lectures. JobFind Australia try to find jobs or projects to go for that are specific to the customer and say they'll explain more when the person attends.



Peer-coach **telephone calls before appointment** to address any concerns or barriers to attending the appointment. Remove uncertainty as it helps that they know the person they're going to meet.

'Change subjective norms' (Theory of Planned Behavior). In other words, describe the experience and value of the appointment *plus* increase perceived behavioural control by helping people feel in control of factors that impact upon their ability to attend.

Motivational Interviewing techniques have been used (asking questions, expressing *some* empathy and supporting self-efficacy). By asking about barriers to encourage a non-confrontational approach (15 minute personal calls). This engagement with the jobseeker's personal circumstances and life - not just employment issues – is seen as a genuine demonstration of care toward them as individuals and leads to increased motivation. Also ask questions that provide the job seeker with freedom, such as "what would *you* like to get out of the appointment/assessment". In the case of Esher House's Psychological Assessment of Readiness to Change (PARC), state that "this survey ensures that we don't waste YOUR time with irrelevant or boring activities."

SMS interventions can be phrased to increase their salience or highlight relevant norms amongst the intended recipients. Including the person's name makes a significant difference to adherence (+11%). This link has other specific examples:

<http://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/sites/default/files/publications/MINDSPACE.pdf>

Sources: Schultz PW, Nolan J, Cialdini RB, Goldstein NJ, Griskevicius V. The constructive, destructive, and reconstructive power of social norms. Psychological Science, 2007;18:429–34 Cioffi D, Garner R. On doing the decision: effects of active versus passive commitment and self-perception. Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin 1996;22:133–44 Overcoming Poor Attendance to First Scheduled Colonoscopy: A Randomized Trial of Peer Coach or Brochure Support Barbara J. Turner, MD, MSED1, Mark Weiner, MD1, Sheila D. Berry1, Karen Lillie3, Kevin Fosnocht, MD1, and Christopher S. Hollenbeak, PhD2 Dolan, P.H., M.; Halpern, D.; King, D.; Vlaev, I., MINDSPACE Influencing behaviour through public policy. 2010. http://www.behaviouralinsights.co.uk/sites/default/files/BIT%20Publication%20EAST_FA_WEB.pdf Hasvold, P. E., & Wootton, R. (2011). Use of telephone and SMS reminders to improve attendance at hospital appointments: a systematic review. Journal of telemedicine and telecare, 17(7), 358-364.

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