

Biases & Mental Shortcuts



Making an Evaluation

- **Representativeness**
When we assume two things are more similar than they really are
- **Availability**
Things that are easy to recall are thought to be more common, or likely to occur
- **Context Effects**
We tend to prefer the middle option



Forming Preferences

- **Present Bias**
A preference for sooner smaller rewards
- **Hot-cold Gap**
We are bad predictors of how changes in our emotions change our preferences
- **Loss Aversion**
We feel losses more strongly than we do gains



How We See Ourselves

- **Hindsight Bias**
When we think we predicted an outcome when we really didn't
- **Overconfidence**
When we believe we know more than we really do
- **Illusion of Control**
When we believe our actions impact events we have no control over



To Take an Action or Not

- **Status Quo Bias**
A preference to 'stick with the current state' or stick with defaults
- **Licensing Effect**
When we use doing something good as an excuse to do something a little bad

Behavioural Interventions



Reframe Information

- **Holistic Thinking**
Present information, and think about it as a whole
Focus on 'the big picture'
- **Loss & Gain Framing**
Present risks as potential losses or as potential gains
- **Mental Accounting**
Setting different accounts for different purposes



Self-Concept Maintenance

- **Self-concept Priming**
People like to be consistent and have a positive view of themselves. Cue this to encourage consistent behaviours
- **Pledges**
Putting something down in writing can be more powerful than a verbal commitment
- **Cue the Future Self**
Help people think about their future by writing letters or imagining what their future will be like



Make it Easy

- **Defaults**
People like to stick with the 'status quo'
- **Fresh Start Effect**
Use specific dates as a 'fresh start'
- **Implementation Intentions**
Break larger tasks down into small specific actions
- **Pre-commitment**
Getting people to commit to an action in the future is easier than committing to an action right now

