

Targeting MIST Behaviour Change Opportunities



A primer to the TESTS methodology



BI in a single-page summary



A person's behaviour...

- *Is often automatic, and based on common cognitive shortcuts.*
- *Depends on their mental, emotional and physical context.*
- *Is not always consistent with their attitudes, beliefs or intentions.*



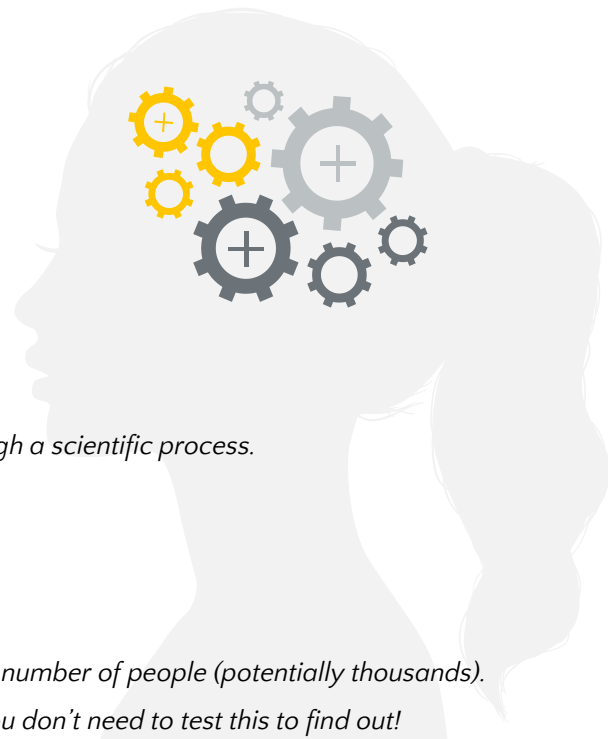
A Behavioural Insights (BI) intervention...

- *Is often a subtle, but calculated change to a decision point, product, or process.*
- *Works best when rigorously tested against possible alternatives, and iterated upon through a scientific process.*
- *Is not a silver bullet, and often just “one link in the chain” to improved outcomes.*



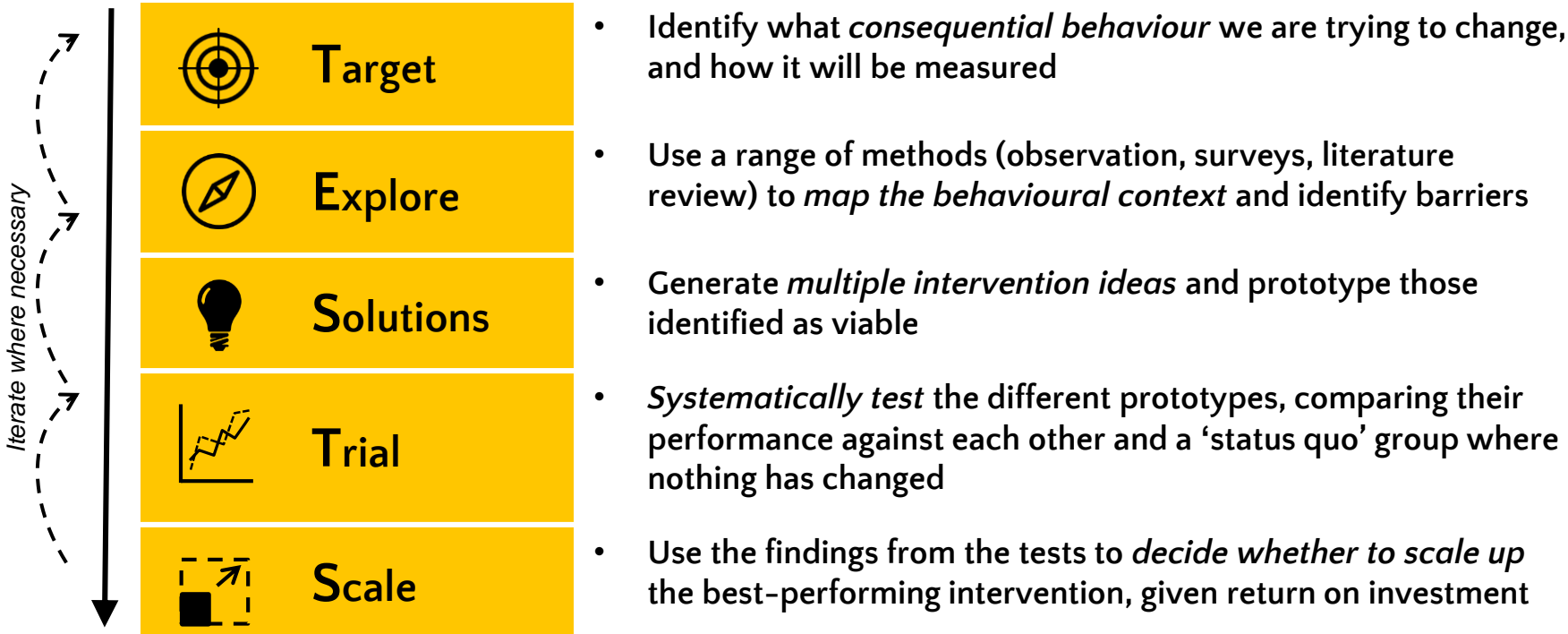
A good candidate for a BI intervention is...

- *When you are trying to change an observable, measurable action.*
- *When you have touchpoints (i.e., interactions via form, e-mail, service kiosk) with a large number of people (potentially thousands).*
- *When there isn't a stand-out solution that would likely work better than a nudge – and you don't need to test this to find out!*





The 'TESTS' Methodology¹



1. Halpern, D. (2016). Behavioural insights and healthier lives VicHealth's inaugural Leading Thinkers residency. Behavioural Insights Team and VicHealth. Retrieved from <https://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/media-and-resources/publications/behavioural-insights-and-healthier-lives>

Datta, S, and Mullainathan, S. (2014). "Behavioral design: a new approach to development policy." Review of Income and Wealth 60.1 : 7-35.



Target

It means:

- Understanding what you want to achieve, with whom, and why it's important.
- Learning whether taking a behavioural science approach is likely to be worthwhile.

It involves:

- Defining project outcomes that are both specific from a behavioural perspective and important from a policy perspective.
- Confirming all of the ingredients are in place for developing and testing possible solutions later.

It presents:

- An opportunity to lay a strong foundation for the project, ensuring all stakeholders agree on the project objectives and problem statement. This may mean “going back to the drawing board” and redefining your objectives before moving on to the next stage.



Target – Behavioural Lens

- First we need to identify as many behavioural components as possible that actually matter to our goal.
- Since we are highly influenced by our own experiences, it may be difficult at first to notice all the behavioural components associated with a specific goal. That's why it's important to take the time to uncover as many layers of behaviour as possible.
- Suppose we have the following goal:

Close the PSE participation gap between low and high SES families

- What behaviours might actually matter for this goal?



Improve...



Academic
performance (e.g.,
graduation rates,
attendance, study
habits)



Financial
readiness and
access to PSE

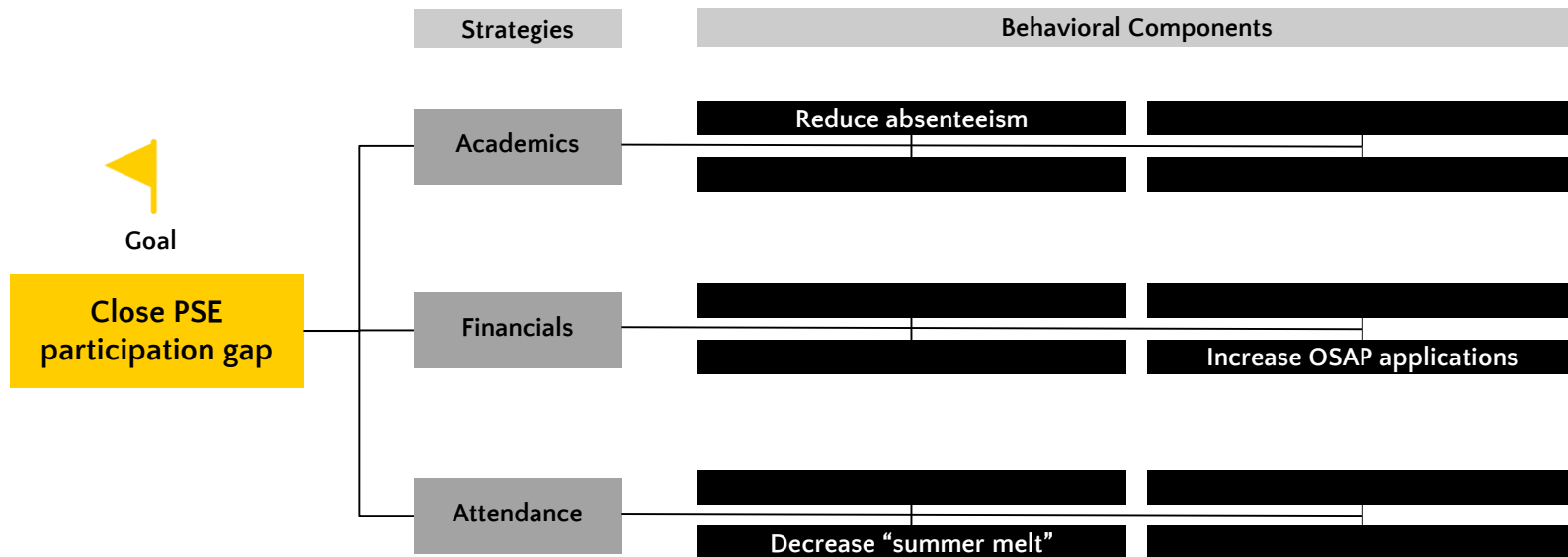


Applications for
and completion
rates of PSE

The list above can be further broken down into more precise behavioural components. The upside to this first round of brainstorming is that it often provides us with a helpful baseline of various strategies that have an impact on our overall goal and nudges us closer to a clearly defined problem statement.

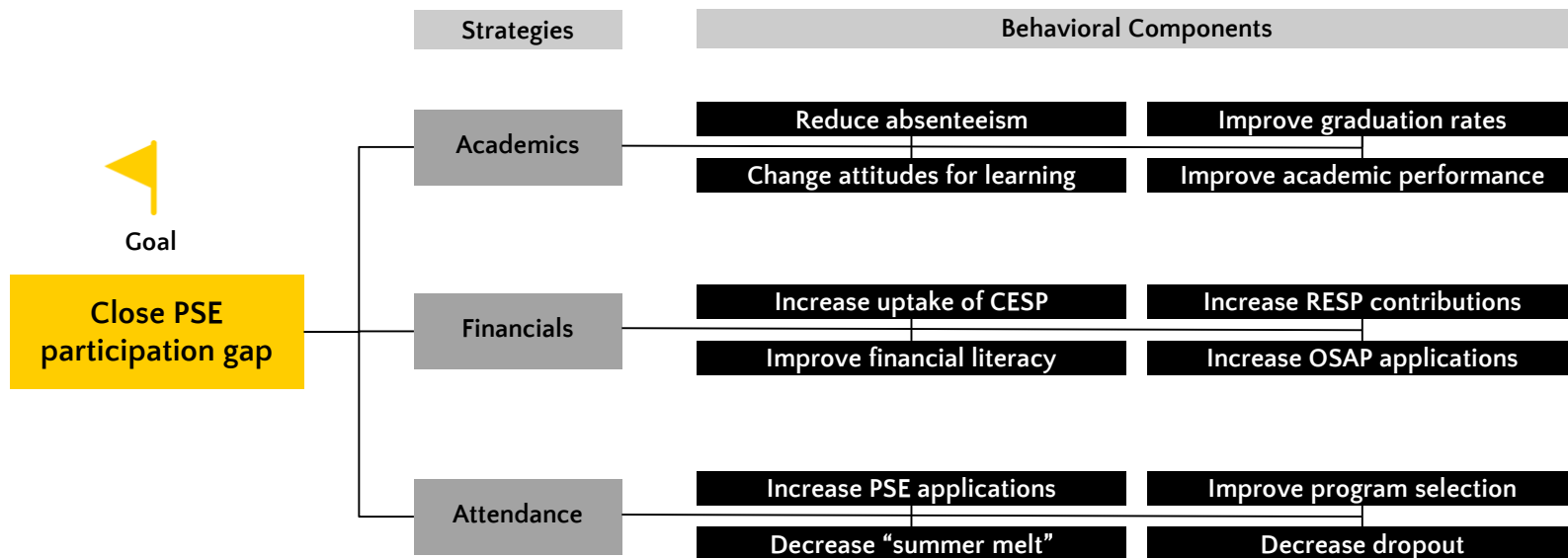


Target – Behavioural Lens





Target – Behavioural Lens





Target - The MIST Framework

- The MIST framework can help you consider which behaviour components could be prioritized for a behavioural insights project.
- To prioritize behaviour change opportunities, ask yourself the following questions for each one:



Measurable

- Is the behaviour **observable**? (E.g., not an attitude)
- Is the behaviour already recorded as **administrative data** or could be recorded easily?



Important

- Does the desired behaviour change have **consequential policy implications**?
- What **evidence** exists that this behaviour change would be important?



Sizable

- Is there a **sufficient sample size** to conduct statistical analyses (usually thousands of individuals)?



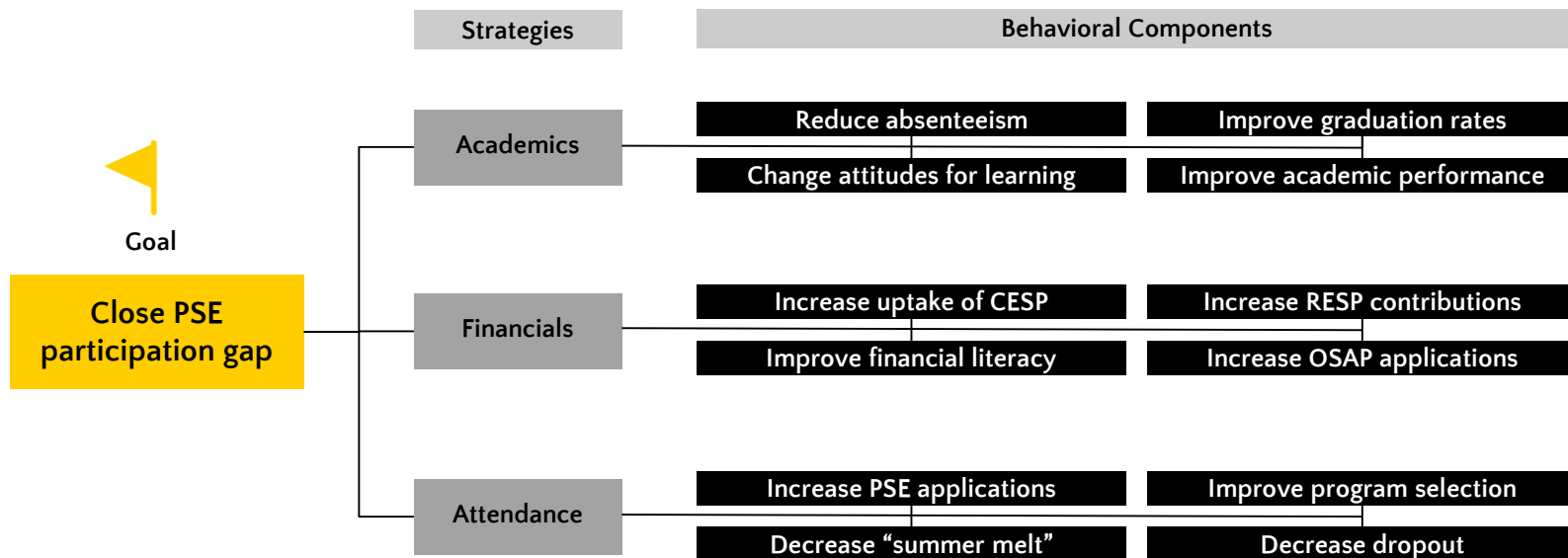
Touch points

- Is there an existing or low-cost opportunity to **deliver an intervention** to the focal population?

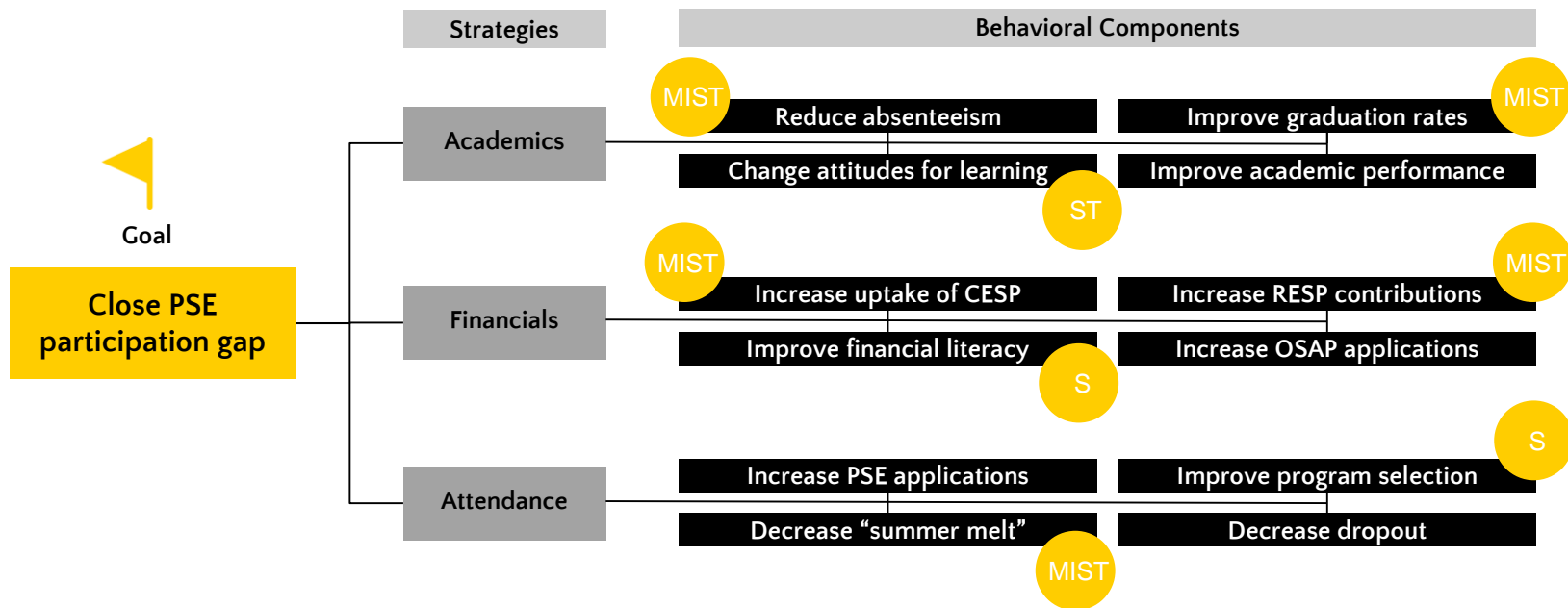
- Go back to the list of behavioural components you previously identified. Add a small indicator (M, I, S, T) for each category that is satisfied.
- If you don't have answers to all the questions right now, make note of any gaps or opportunities for exploration



Target – Behavioural Lens

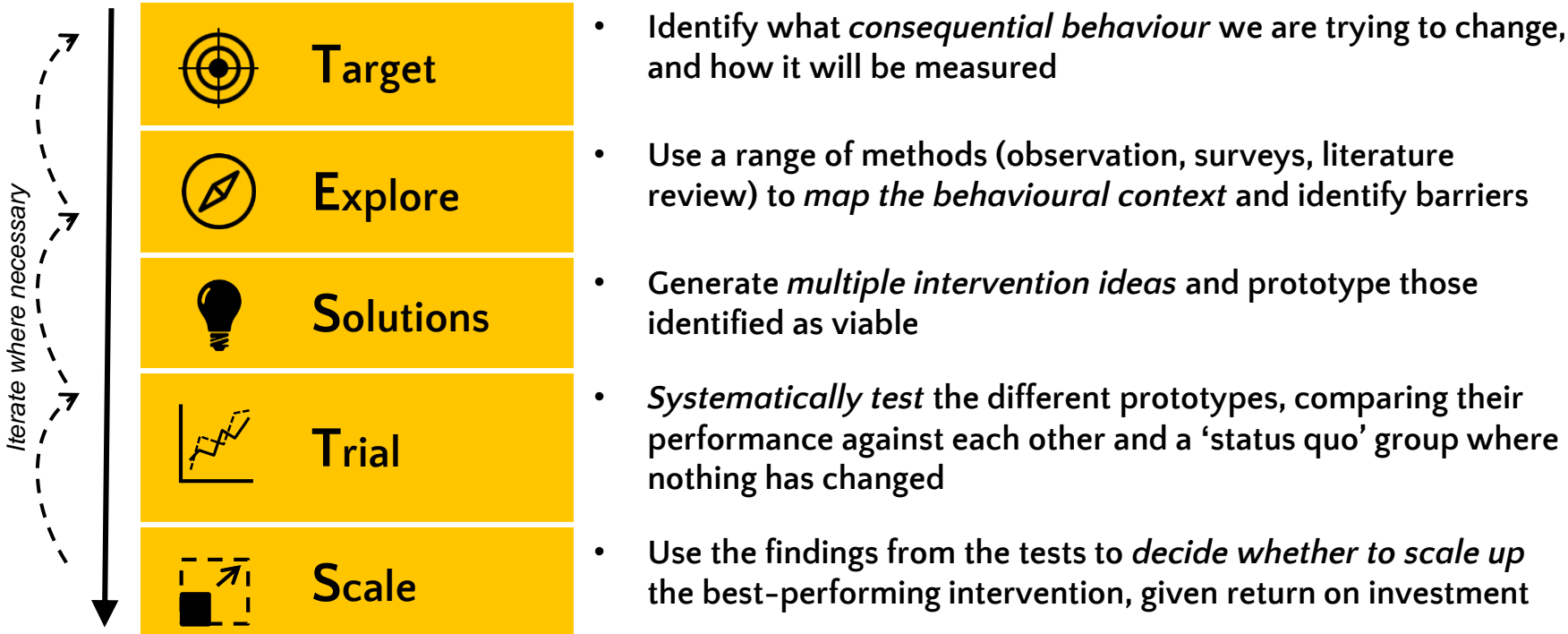


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A Rough Behavioural Map of the PSE Journey

