

EASIEST Online Forum Program

Thursday, November 29th, 2018, 11:00am to 1:00pm PST

- Welcome and introductions 10 minutes
- The EASIEST Project – A brief overview 5 minutes
- Nudging Changes in Human Services:
The Behavioral Interventions to Advance Self-Sufficiency Project by MDRC 30 minutes
- Closer to Home – Service Design in the BC Public Service 20 minutes
- The Biz Hub Model – practical lessons for program improvements 20 minutes
- EASIEST – What we've heard and what's next 15 minutes
- Panelist Q&A 15 minutes



Nudging Changes in Human Services: The Behavioral Interventions to Advance Self-Sufficiency Project by MDRC

Many social programs are designed in such a way that individuals must make active decisions and go through a series of steps in order to benefit from them. Program designers often assume that individuals will carefully consider options, analyze details, and make decisions that maximize their well-being; however, over the past thirty years, innovative research — much of it in the area of “behavioral science” — has shown that human decision-making is often imperfect and imprecise.

The Behavioral Interventions to Advance Self-Sufficiency (BIAS) project, sponsored by the Administration for Children and Families in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, was the first major opportunity to apply a behavioral research lens to human services programs that serve low-income families in the United States. The project, led by MDRC, applied insights from behavioral science to the operations, implementation, and structure of social service programs and policies in an attempt to improve their efficacy.

This presentation will describe how the BIAS project applied a problem solving methodology called behavioral diagnosis and design to develop interventions that aimed to improve aspects of human services programs, such as increasing client participation in services offered. The presentation will also detail the results of the interventions, which were tested in randomized controlled trials.

Presenter Bio

Xavier Alemañy, Design Analyst, Center for Applied Behavioral Science (CABS) at MDRC



Xavier Alemañy works in the Center for Applied Behavioral Science, or CABS, at MDRC, where he leads the graphic design and development of behaviorally informed intervention materials for MDRC’s behavioral projects. Alemañy specializes in a user-centered approach to redesigning program communications and collaborating with partner organizations to teach and share insights from behavioral science and human-centered design techniques. Over the last two years, he has worked to design and test behavioral solutions on projects including the Behavioral Interventions to Advance Self-Sufficiency Next Generation (BIAS NG) and Encouraging Additional Summer Enrollment (EASE) projects. He has also worked one-on-one to help programs incorporate insights from behavioral science to strengthen their service delivery, as a part of technical assistance engagements such as the Health Profession Opportunity Grants (HPOG) Behavioral Webinar Series and the Annie E. Casey Foundation Executive-Skills Coaching Pilot Technical Assistance project. Alemañy holds a BA in Psychology and a BBA in Business Management from the University of North Florida.

Service Design in the BC Public Service

The Service Design team, located in Government Communication and Public Engagement's Government Digital Experience Division, is changing how citizens access government services by looking at services holistically, and bringing innovation and a human-centred approach to areas such as health care, transportation, education, policy and finance, with the focus on improving services, working together with citizens, stakeholders, and government.

This presentation will take you through service design fundamentals, and how B.C. government applies design thinking tools and methodologies to build holistic citizen-centred services, products and applications.

Presenter Bios

Deanna Young, Manager, Service Design Specialist, Government Digital Experience Division (GDX), Province of B.C.



Deanna Young has spent 28 years in the B.C. Public Service asking how government can build better services for citizens. As the former Ministry Web Manager and User Experience Lead for the Ministry of Education, and now as the Service Design Manager for the Government Digital Experience Division (GDX), Deanna always puts the citizen first. She works with ministries to help them understand their users and develop the tools and services they need. For Deanna, it's all about doing the research with real people, talking to citizens and asking questions that uncover their challenges – and yield real solutions. Outside of work, you can find Deanna practicing design principles at the skating rink, where she coaches figure skating.

Sim Shakhder, Service Design Specialist, Government Digital Experience Division (GDX), Province of B.C.



Sim Shakhder has worked with leading Design studios, Technology services, Strategic Communications, and Innovation consultants in Singapore, Japan, India, and Canada. In her practice spanning eleven years, she has handled comprehensive visual and systems design, ethnographic research, workshop facilitation, and product development for clients in the private and public sectors. Her experience collaborating with cross-functional teams within multi-disciplinary organizations has encouraged her to channelize her problem-solving abilities into creative and sustainable solutions. Currently, she is working as a Service Design Specialist with British Columbia's Government Digital Experience Division, applying her insights and knowledge about the human-centered design approach to building innovative solutions for citizen-centred service delivery.

The Biz Hub Model – Practical lessons for program improvements

Biz Hub is an innovative project that brings together BC employment service providers to address and improve business process issues using a collaborative approach. In Biz Hub, practitioners from employment services agencies across BC work together to identify, co-design, implement and evaluate strategies to improve client, staff and employer engagement and staff capacity outcomes. Attendees will learn about the overall approach, which engages and encourages agencies to focus on outcomes they want to achieve and creates a “space” for collaborative creative problem solving that holds the client perspective as paramount for identifying solutions. A panel of practitioners and project team members will describe the approaches used to bring about business process improvements, including business process mapping, user-centred design, behavioural insights, data collection and evaluation.

Presenter Bios

Susanna Gurr is Research Director and Chief Privacy Officer for the Social Research and Demonstration Corporation (SRDC) and Managing Director of the BC Centre for Employment Excellence. Susanna is an experienced evaluator who has managed and conducted social policy research and evaluation for over 30 years. Her research and program experience with social and health issues spans many areas, including employment, education and income security. She holds an MA in Economics, a BSc in Mathematics, and is a CES Credentialed Evaluator.

Dr. Barbara Dobson is a Principal Researcher at Goodson Consulting, an independent consultancy. She has worked on a range of program evaluations, including designing, implementing and reporting on local and national evaluation studies within the social policy and public health arenas for over 20 years. Prior to joining Goodson Consulting, Barbara was a Principal Research Consultant at SRDC and a Research Fellow at the Centre for Research in Social Policy at Loughborough University, United Kingdom.

Greg Lockwood is Research Associate with the Social Research and Demonstration Corporation. Previously he was Stakeholder Coordinator at the BC Centre for Employment Excellence where he helped steer the Centre’s communications, website, webinars, podcasts and other products and services targeted to career development practitioners throughout BC. He has a keen interest in issues affecting the BC labour market and capacity building within the employment and immigration sectors. In 2009 he completed an MA in Economics at SFU.