

There are several popular models all designed to help us understand what drives behaviour, how decisions are made, and how we can influence those decisions.

COM-B is a robust and widely used model. It was developed at **UCL, Centre for Behaviour Change** by **Susan Michie, Maartje M van Stralen**, and **Robert West**.

The **COM-B model** provides insight into three components, which it suggests play a pivotal role in producing, and therefore changing, behaviour. Here we explain what this model is, its three components and how you can use it to change behaviour.



Capability

Capability is the knowledge, skills and abilities needed to engage in a particular behaviour. It includes:

- **Psychological Capability:** our knowledge or psychological strength, skills and stamina
- **Physical Capability:** our physical strength, skill and stamina that we have or can develop.



Opportunity

Opportunity identifies external factors that make a particular behaviour change possible. It includes:

- **Physical Opportunity:** provided by the existing or created environment, like time, location and resources
- **Social Opportunity:** arising from social factors, such as societal/cultural norms or social cues



Motivation

Motivation describes internal processes that influence our decision making and behaviours. It includes:

- **Reflective Motivation:** involving deliberative activity such as making plans or evaluating what's already happened
- **Automatic Motivation:** subconscious processes happening without consideration e.g. our desires, impulses and inhibition

CAPABILITY

ELEMENT	PSYCHOLOGICAL	CONSIDER?	IMPACT 1=LOW / 5=HIGH	BEHAVIOURAL OPTIONS
	Knowledge or mental skills needed	Do they understand what you want them to do? Do they have the mental skills and info to process and act?		
	Memory: short/long-term;; semantic; procedural.	Is there key information to be remembered- short or long-term? Is the information easy or difficult to recall?		
	Mental energy and attention: 'bandwidth'	Does attention need to be focussed or maintained for a long time? Is there significant cognitive load at key points?		
	Decision processing: steps needed and their order	How many decisions are people being asked to make? Are the decisions in an easy or straightforward sequence?		

ELEMENT	PHYSIOLOGICAL	CONSIDER?	IMPACT 1=LOW / 5=HIGH	BEHAVIOURAL OPTIONS
	Physical skill: the motor abilities needed	Is there any physical ability/strength/dexterity needed? Are there any considerations linked to diversity to include?		

OPPORTUNITY

ELEMENT	SOCIAL	CONSIDER?	IMPACT 1=LOW / 5=HIGH	BEHAVIOURAL OPTIONS
	Social accountability: others who are part of the process	Is there a need to consult anyone else? Could the decision affect anyone else?		
	Social norms: what the audience sees as acceptable	Are there any social norms that apply? Is there the potential to link this to an existing social norm?		
	Identity: how does this audience see themselves	Is there a default or 'normal' behaviour? Does this fit with an existing identity you're aware of?		

ELEMENT	ENVIRONMENT	CONSIDER?	IMPACT 1=LOW / 5=HIGH	BEHAVIOURAL OPTIONS
	Resources: context in which the decision will be made	Is there enough time to engage, and is info to hand? Could you prime a mindset – visuals, sound, smell or copy?		
	Affordance: seems like a reasonable payoff	Is the language simple and clear with a specific CtA? Could the layout/wording trigger an automatic response?		

MOTIVATION

ELEMENT	AUTOMATIC	CONSIDER?	IMPACT 1=LOW / 5=HIGH	BEHAVIOURAL OPTIONS
	Habit: a standard behaviour among the target group	Is this a common response among the target cluster? Promote habituation by bundling with another behaviour?		
	Feelings: concerns; fears; risk; opportunity; desires.	Is this something people might want to do? Can you show progress? Is there a sense of entitlement, obligation or implied reciprocity?		
	Automatic response: unconscious activity	Is there a default or 'normal' behaviour? Does the choice have salience or popularity currently?		

ELEMENT	REFLECTIVE	CONSIDER?	IMPACT 1=LOW / 5=HIGH	BEHAVIOURAL OPTIONS
	Beliefs and values held personally	Is this relevant to the audience or someone important to them? Do they believe the outcome worthwhile- and they have agency?		
	Attitude towards process, outcomes or consequences	Will this deliver an important outcome for them? Or ANO? Will they have the resources, or can you provide them?		
	Belief in abilities: optimism & pessimism on outcome	Do they have confidence in their ability to do it? How to reinforce? Might overconfidence influence response in progress?		
	Intentions: a public or private commitment	Is there a strong/weak initial desire to do this? Do you have evidence of previous intent?		