Eliciting behavior change of citizens to combat COVID-19 in Japan through use of behavioral insights
**Behavioral Sciences Team (BEST) - Japan’s nationwide challenge**

- **Established**
  - In April 2017 on the initiative of Japan’s Ministry of the Environment

- **Mission**
  - Help people make **better choices** by guiding their own **autonomous decisions** w/o stress in a **personalized way**, preserving **freedom of choice**

- **Objectives**
  - Implement **rigorous impact evaluation** and **evidence-based policymaking (EBPM)** & practice (EBP) by keeping **transparency and accountability**
  - Disseminate effective **behavioral approaches** that supplement traditional policy measures in both public and private sectors
  - Make the **behavioral approaches take root locally** by creating a win-win-win situation for all stakeholders
Basic Strategy to combat COVID-19 in Japan

<Overall Goal>
Maximization of suppression of transmission and Minimization of socio-economic damage

1. Early detection of and early response to clusters

2. Early patient diagnosis and enhancement of intensive care and the securing of a medical service system for the severely ill

3. **Behavior change of citizens**
   - To avoid high risk environment
   - To take basic disease-prevention measures including hand washing and disinfection
   - To increase resistance with a balanced diet, moderate exercise, rest and sleep etc.

Behavioral insights to promote hand washing and disinfection

- Previously, the rubbing alcohol was placed at the height of eyes at the entrance of rooms in the Ministry of the Environment in order to make it easy to find it.
- An arrow tape has been placed to make it easier for people to notice the rubbing alcohol. Message to show gratitude for cooperation has also been added.
- According to a difference-in-difference experiment, the consumption of alcohol increased three-fold by the installation of the tape on March 2020.

At the entrance of a room in the Ministry of the Environment
Behavioral insights to promote hand washing and disinfection (2)

- An arrow tape has been placed on the floor to make it easier for people to notice the rubbing alcohol at the entrance to the city hall of Uji City.
- The number of users increased by approx. 10% compared to before the installation.
- Following the example of Uji City, other municipalities are developing similar initiatives.

- Nudge message encouraging soap hand washing is displayed on the toilet vanity in a national garden (Shinjuku Gyoen) based on a UK study*.
- Message to show gratitude for cooperation is also added.

Hiketa elementary and junior high school in Kagawa Prefecture uses its local product named “Hiketa buri” or yellowtail to encourage students to recognize the distance of two meters to maintain physical distancing.

They say “I-buri-buri-you” with a happy melody. It is because the length of adult yellowtail is about a meter, which all the citizens in the city know.

Other municipalities can customize this case by substituting yellowtail by their own local products.
Behavioral insights to maintain physical distancing (2)

- Resona Bank, Ltd has placed plush toys on some sheets in the waiting room. Customers are able to maintain physical distancing.
Behavioral insights to organize lines and ease congestion

- Previously, automated ticket vending machines for the general public and manned booths for discounted visitors to check their IDs were **separated by color** in a national garden.
- Before the cherry blossom viewing season, **guiding tape was placed on the road surface in the colors corresponding to the fees to make it easier to see where to stand in line.**
- In addition to benefiting visitors, **the management of the park has also benefited from improved operations.**

**Shinjuku Gyoen (*1), Ministry of the Environment**

Additional guiding tape is installed on the road surface

Some were pointing to the tape and lining up again
Behavioral insights to organize lines and ease congestion (2)

- To avoid crowded place with many people nearby and close-contact setting, the number of people who can enter the coffee shop is restricted.
- To go only.
- Blue **guiding tape was placed** on the road surface both at the entrance and near the shop to make it easier to see where to stand in line.

At the entrance

Near the shop
Behavioral insights to organize lines and ease congestion (3)

- You can find similar cases everywhere in Japan.

At the entrance of a post office

In a shopping center
Behavioral insights to avoid droplet infection

- To avoid droplet infection by close-range conversations, passengers are required to stop talking. (*this is not nudge but regulation)
- In order to keep them quiet, posters clearly indicating what kind of behavior people are required to take are displaced.

At the elevator hall of the Ministry of the Environment

Inside an elevator
Behavioral insights to keep social distancing

- To avoid crowded place with many people nearby and close-contact setting, many entities are creating **logos depicting the importance of keeping social distancing**.
- In order to make it easy to understand what kind of behavior people are required to take, a simple, language-independent pictogram might be effective.

![Logo by Rakuten, Inc.](source: Rakuten, Inc. (corp.rakuten.co.jp/social-distance/))
Behavioral insights to increase resistance with moderate exercise

- It is of great importance to **eliminate cabin fever and lack of exercise during staying at home** in an emergency situation.
- Dr. Michiya Tanimoto, a Nudge Ambassador appointed by the Behavioral Sciences Team, created a **video named Muscle “Genki” Gymnastics**.
- In gymnastics, you are **empowered with powerful words utilizing behavioral insights**.

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www.youtube.com/watch?v=KhhLVEtVh-E&feature=youtu.be