

Intervention Brief Document:

Improving participant retention in Court Link

What behavioural factors lead to poor retention in the Court Link program?

- The perceived 'costs' of attending, such as the effort involved in completing Court Link tasks and attending Court Link meetings, are incurred now. However, the benefits of undertaking the Court Link program become clear further in the future. It is important to psychologically minimise the perceived costs of attending courtlink, and maximise the perceived benefits of undertaking the Court Link program.
 - Many Court Link participants have had negative experiences in the criminal justice system and with government services. As such, participants may be more easily influenced by nudges that originate from peers rather than messages addressed from government services.
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Our solution:

- Minimising the perceived costs of attending Court Link meetings and maximising the perceived benefits by changing the way Court Link communicates with participants in between meetings, leveraging existing messaging infrastructure to do so.
- First, we leverage behavioural insights into the use of progress indicators and sub-goals to nudge participant retention. Progress towards achieving sub-goals is more salient and makes for easier progress towards a large overall goal.
- Second, we use messages from peers who successfully completed the program. This has the effect of making the future benefits of the program salient, as well as communicating to participants through the trustworthy voice of a peer.

Court Link's resources:

- Court Link currently has in place software that allows it to generate text message reminders to send to Court Link participants. Court Link also stores data on its participants, including:
 - Name, location and gender,
 - Whether they identify as Indigenous or Torres Strait Islander,
 - Broad categories for issues the participant seeks to tackle (such as homelessness, alcohol or drug addiction), known as 'open goals'.
- Court Link is currently upgrading its software infrastructure to allow staff to pull data from its database. Assuming this occurs, this intervention leverages these existing resources to allow Court Link staff to generate text messages to be sent to participants.



Intervention	Behavioural Insight
<p><u>Progress indicators and sub-goals</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grouping tasks together with some tasks already completed motivates people to complete the set of tasks (Barasz et al, 2017). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proceeding from this insight, we send participants a graphic indicating their progress towards milestones. When the distance to a goal is uncertain, discrete progress markers can help reduce uncertainty and thus improve performance (Amir & Ariely, 2008). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We leverage this insight by describing the 12 week course as being 3 sections of 4 weeks each, with the end of each 4 week period being a milestone. After every meeting we will send the participant a thank you/congratulatory message. Thanking participants has the effect of reinforcing that behaviour (The Behavioural Insights Team, 2012). This also shows participants their progress towards a subgoal. At the first milestone (4 weeks), participants will create an implementation intention plan (an 'if-then' plan) which will guide their progress to the next milestone (8 weeks). Giving participants agency in designing implementation intention plans increases the likelihood of goal completion (Gollwitzer, 1999).
<p><u>Peer messages</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The benefits of peer communication are twofold: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> People are more likely to act on information when the messenger has similar characteristics to themselves (Durantini et al, 2006). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examples of experiences which peers have had in the program makes salient the benefits of temporally distant gains, bringing forward some of the benefits of undertaking the program (The Behavioural Insights Team, 2014). Using this insight, we recommend that Court Link source feedback from former participants who successfully completed the program. This feedback, matched with participants on the basis of their personal characteristics, will be sent to participants in weeks 2 and 6.

