



5 behavioural **patterns** to watch for when rolling out new guidelines, tools, or policies

And how to spot
them in your
organisation

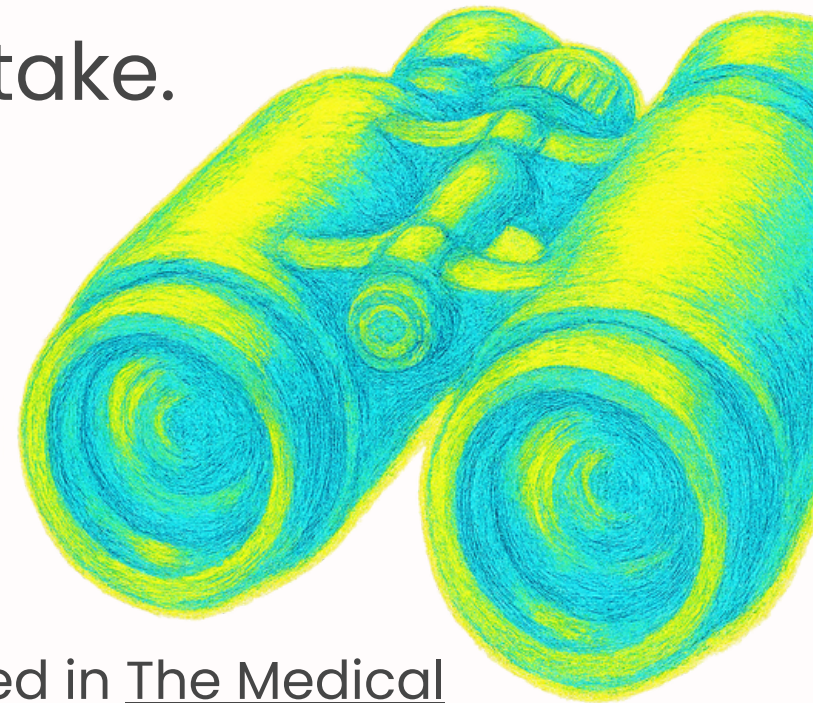




Why bring a behavioural science lens to adoption?

When adoption stalls, it's often not because people don't care, but because something in the system isn't working.

Use this cheat sheet to spot behavioural red flags and redesign for better uptake.



Based on behavioural science research published in The Medical Journal of Australia (2013) and The Australian Journal of General Practice (2024).



Over-reliance on judgement

“I’ve done this long enough. I know what works.”

What to look for:

- Experienced team members skipping new processes
- Tool or guideline seen as rigid or less reliable than personal judgement
- Feedback like “this doesn’t reflect real context”

Underlying issue:

Motivation: preference for autonomy or intuition





Passive disregard

“I couldn’t find it... I meant to... I just ran out of time.”

What to look for:

- Tool or guideline not embedded into existing workflow
- Low usage despite general agreement on its value
- Delayed follow-through on assigned tasks

Underlying issue:

Opportunity: friction in access or time constraints





Active disregard

“This doesn’t work for us. We’ve stopped using it.”

What to look for:

- Tool is formally available but no longer used
- People find workarounds or build shadow systems
- “It’s not fit for purpose” becomes a shared belief

Underlying issue:

Motivation: low trust in the tool’s relevance





Adjusting the tool

“I tweak it a bit. It doesn’t account for everything.”

What to look for:

- Users selectively follow guidance or modify inputs
- Informal shortcuts emerge in usage
- Team members disagree on when or how to apply the tool

Underlying issue:

Capability or Motivation: perceived gaps in how the tool maps to real-world needs





Misuse or incomplete use

“I thought that was optional.”
“I’m not sure how to use it best.”

What to look for:

- Tool or guideline is used inconsistently or incorrectly
- Key steps skipped due to unclear instructions or training gaps
- Confusion about purpose or expected outcomes

Underlying issue:

Capability: gaps in knowledge or clarity





Don't just retrain. Redesign the system.

Use the COM-B model to identify whether the gap is in:

- **Capability** (Do they know how?)
- **Opportunity** (Can they use it easily?)
- **Motivation** (Do they see value in it?)

When you fix the system, behaviour follows.





Want support applying this framework?

If you're trying to shift behaviour across onboarding, upskilling or compliance, I'd love to help.

I design learning experiences that work with how people actually think, decide, and act.

Always happy to connect.

