

Behavioural Design Ethics Checklist

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Behavioural Design

Behavioural Design Ethics

A checklist that guides you through ethical considerations in a project.

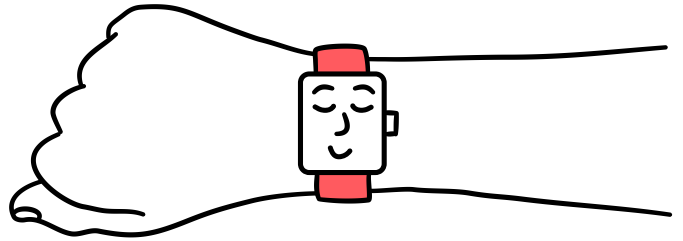
? Why this checklist?

Ethics in Behavioural Design are not just a relevant but indispensable topic to think about and act upon. Know-how of behavioural psychology can be a powerful tool to shape choices and behaviour. We have created this Behavioural Ethics checklist to make sure we leverage this power to do good.

📅 How to use this checklist?

The checklist covers three project steps:

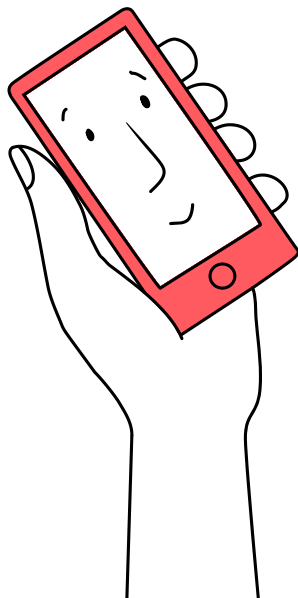
- ✔ **Project Intake**
- ✔ **Project Preparation**
- ✔ **Intervention Evaluation**



Use the questions as a guide to reveal and discuss the considerations you need to make in your project to safeguard ethics.

They will help you, your team or client to ask the right questions at the right time and to build ethical awareness and balance into your projects. Not all questions are always relevant. But some are. Especially the 🚦 questions. A 'red light' there is a definite 'no-go' to us.









We've also created a Behavioural Ethics Cards addressing the same questions. Some teams prefer to work with cards instead of a checklist. Whatever works best for you. May the force for good be with you my fellow crusader!



Project Intake







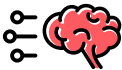



Use this checklist before you start a project. Sit down together with the project team after you received a briefing. The questions are designed to help you guide through ethical considerations before you accept or start a project.

Not all questions are always relevant. But some are. Especially the stoplight questions. If there is a 'red' light there, you should not accept the project. Of course, the world isn't always as black and white, and sometimes we operate in shades of grey. This checklist helps you to ask the right questions at the right time.














CONSIDERATION	CHECKED	QUESTIONS YOU NEED TO ASK YOURSELF
 Goals		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the project trying to achieve? • Are the goals transparent? • What does success look like for the client or the final decision-maker?
 Mission Fit		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does it fit with our company mission or is there an unbridgeable mismatch? • Will it help achieve (parts of) our mission?
 Human Value		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why is the project important for people? • Will it help improve their decision-making? • Or will it help people progress in their work, life or living environment?
 Collective Value		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What value does it provide for the community? • Can it potentially have a positive influence on a larger group of people?



Project Intake

CONSIDERATION	CHECKED	QUESTIONS YOU NEED TO ASK YOURSELF
 <p>Success</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does success look like to us; both personally as professionally? • Can this be achieved? • Do we need to be aware of circumstances that may hinder our success?
 <p>Problem</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there already evidence of the behavioural drivers of the problem we need to take into account? • Can we do research to understand the problem (better)?
 <p>Benefiting Ourselves</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How might the project benefit ourselves? • Will it give us personal gratification? • Will it help us fulfill our mission? • Will we have a great learning experience? • Or can we build expertise in a specific domain?
 <p>Spread Knowledge</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there a possibility to spread the knowledge and or interventions of the project beyond the project itself? • Is the client open to this? • Can we make a case study from the project?
 <p>Harm to people</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How might the project cause unintentional harm to people or the community? • Are there possible negative consequences or uneven risks we need to be aware of?

Project Intake









CONSIDERATION	CHECKED	QUESTIONS YOU NEED TO ASK YOURSELF
  <p>Protecting People</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What measures can be taken to protect people or communities from identified harm? • Are we / our client willing to take these protective measures and capable of doing so?
  <p>Harm to Ourselves</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How might the project cause unintentional harm to ourselves? • Does it offend our company or personal beliefs? • Is there someone not willing to work on the project because of personal beliefs?
  <p>Protecting Ourselves</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What measures can be taken to protect the project team from identified harm? • Are we / our client willing to take these protective measures and capable of doing so?
 <p>Cultural Differences</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there any cultural sensitivities we need to take into account not to harm, insult people/communities that could stand in the way of success? • Which values and traditions are essential to the people we are designing a solution for?
 <p>Power Balance</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the client open to accept the insights? • Are the participants in the research participating voluntarily?















Project Preparation

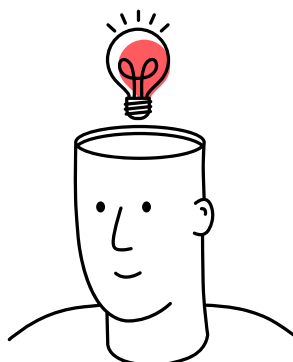
Use this checklist before you start a project. Sit down together with the project team when you are preparing a project.

Not all questions are always relevant. But some are. Especially the stoplight questions. If there is a 'red' light there, the project needs to be reconsidered. Of course, the world isn't always as black and white, and sometimes we operate in shades of grey. This checklist helps you to ask the right questions at the right time.











CONSIDERATION	CHECKED	QUESTIONS YOU NEED TO ASK YOURSELF
 <p>Proven Concepts</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can we learn from existing solutions to similar challenges that helped people or communities make better decisions or progress?
 <p>Context</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do we have enough know-how of (local) communities we are designing the intervention for? • How can we gather more information? • Can we involve stakeholders? • Do we need a system intervention?
 <p>Experts</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can we consult experts to give their expert opinion on the subject? • Have we ensured competency in the team? • Is there enough experience in Behavioural Design?
 <p>Partners</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can we partner with or contact BIT, BIU or nudge units to learn from them? • Will we consult existing research reports to gain know-how or realise economic savings?

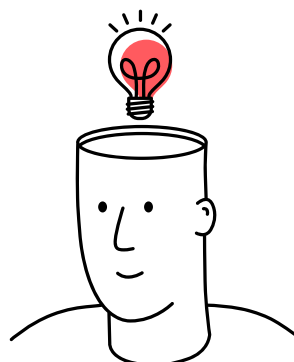
Project Preparation

CONSIDERATION	CHECKED	QUESTIONS YOU NEED TO ASK YOURSELF
  <p>Privacy</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are measures put in place to make sure respondents can rely on anonymity? • Will names, quotes, photos, video materials and interviews be anonymised and destroyed?
 <p>Respondent Selection</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does our respondent selection also represent minorities, every gender, different ethnicities, income levels and living locations when we are designing solutions for non-specific target groups?
  <p>Recruitment</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the respondent selection agency comply with all the GDPR rules? • Will the client comply with all the GDPR rules?
 <p>Data Collection</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do we make sure we only collect what is necessary? • How do we make sure the data is collected anonymously? • How do we safeguard privacy and confidentiality?
 <p>Data Security</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will we secure any data we capture? • How do you make sure the project team and the client give informed consent?



Project Preparation












CONSIDERATION	CHECKED	QUESTIONS YOU NEED TO ASK YOURSELF
 <p>Recording of Insights</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will we capture and record our research and findings? • Have we taken measures to inform respondents about this? • Do we design informed consent for respondents, experts and third parties?
 <p>Closure</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What happens to information from the research at the end of the project?
 <p>Language Barriers</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could there be potential language barriers? • How do we prepare for those? • Will a clarity & simplicity check be done?
 <p>Reaching People</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will we get to the people we want to learn from? • Are there possible biases or barriers related to us as a sender we need to anticipate?
 <p>Reaching Us</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have we made it simple for people to reach us? • Have we provided exact contact details and way-finding? • Is there a project contact designated to answer questions during the project/research?

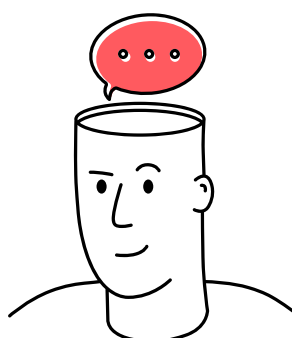


Intervention Evaluation

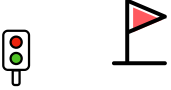













Use this checklist before you decide to go ahead with an intervention. Sit down together with the project team and decide upon a go/no go or optimisation.

Not all questions are always relevant. But some are. Especially the stoplight questions. If there is a 'red' light there, the intervention should not be put in place. Of course, the world isn't always as black and white, and sometimes we operate in shades of grey. This checklist helps you to ask the right questions at the right time.















CONSIDERATION	CHECKED	QUESTIONS YOU NEED TO ASK YOURSELF
  <p>Human Value</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the behavioural intervention help people progress in work or life? • Does it improve their decision-making?
 <p>Community Value</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the behavioural intervention help communities progress? • Does it improve the living environment of a significant group of people?
  <p>Truth</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the behavioural intervention based on honest human insights? • Don't we lie, whitewash or sugar-coat?
  <p>SUE Influence Framework®</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the interventions genuinely based on findings from the SUE Influence Framework®? • Does it resolve pains, enhance gains, take-away anxieties or create better comforts?



Intervention Evaluation

CONSIDERATION	CHECKED	QUESTIONS YOU NEED TO ASK YOURSELF
 <p>Jobs-To-Be-Done</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the behavioural intervention help people progress towards achieving their job(s)-to-be-done in a better way?
 <p>Feasibility</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the behavioural intervention achievable? Can it be done within reason?
 <p>Cognitive Bias</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have we checked if the behavioural intervention or prototyping hasn't been affected by biases (e.g. status quo bias, optimism bias, availability bias)?
 <p>Simplicity</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have we made the intervention simple enough in form or communication?
 <p>Accessibility</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have we provided an infrastructure for people to easily access or participate in the interventions?
 <p>Scalability</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can we run a pilot project(s) to measure the impact on a scale? Can we add quantitative data?
 <p>Sustainability</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have we thought about how to sustain the desired behaviour? Can we monitor the behaviour over a more extended period to measure if the behavioural change sticks?

Intervention Evaluation

CONSIDERATION	CHECKED	QUESTIONS YOU NEED TO ASK YOURSELF
 <p>People Consequence</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How might the publication of the research affect the people involved? • Can it be done within reason?
 <p>Community Consequence</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How might the publication of the research effect the communities involved? • Are there possible (unintended) side-effects?
 <p>Transparency & Way-out</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can we be transparent about the behavioural intervention? • Is there a way-out for people? • Have we deployed rules for discontinuity?
 <p>Legal Permission</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do we need legal permission for the behavioural intervention?
 <p>Sampling</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If a sample size is used, did we consider fairness and justice in the sample?
 <p>Effects</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will long-term side-effects be monitored? • Will unexpected side-effects be reported? • Will we report what works and what not?
 <p>Accountability</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have we provided contact details if people have questions about the research or behavioural intervention? • Is someone made accountable?

You and Ethics

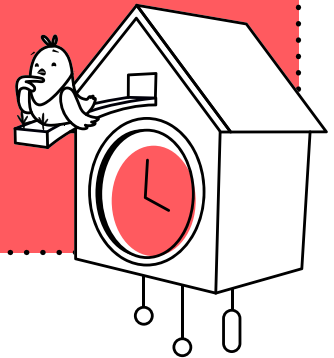


You and this checklist

You can have ethical guidelines and checklists on paper, but in the end, they have to be applied in practice. That's where you come in. I genuinely hope this checklist gives you a practical tool to **build ethical awareness and balance** into our projects. And allows you totimely address (unintentional) side-effects of our behavioural interventions.

We need curious, forward-thinking people who want to design behaviour for good. It all starts with our behaviour. So your behaviour matters. A lot.

The checklist is shaped to our mission and method^[1].



Please, feel free to adjust them to your mission statement. Just as long as your mission is to design for positive decisions and behaviour, we are perfectly fine with that!



The checklist and other Behavioural Design Ethics tools can all be found and downloaded on our **website**.

Should you have best practices or suggestions to make these better, please **contact us**. This is work in progress. And designing progress is what we at SUE are all about!



Astrid Groenewegen

CO-FOUNDER SUE | BEHAVIOURAL DESIGN ACADEMY

¹ Ethical toolkit.org and the BASIC toolkit have inspired our checklist and cards, but we have made them relevant for our way of working/company mission.



Behavioural Design

This is a tool of the SUE | Behavioural Design Ethics.



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