

# CLINICAL WEBINARS

## FOR HEALTH SERVICE PSYCHOLOGISTS

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TRANSLATING RESEARCH TO PRACTICE

# Ways That Mental Health Professionals Can Encourage COVID-19 Vaccination

Noel Brewer, PhD

Gillings Distinguished Professor in Public Health

@noelTbrewer 

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# Noel Brewer, PhD



Noel Brewer, PhD, is the Gillings Distinguished Professor of Public Health at the University of North Carolina. He has a PhD in health psychology from Rutgers University. Dr. Brewer's research explores why people engage in vaccination and other health behaviors that prevent cancer. He has published over 300 papers on these topics including behaviors related to vaccination, tobacco warnings, and screening tests. He was recognized by Clarivate as among the top 1% most cited researchers in the world since 2017. He advises the World Health Organization and US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on vaccination. He has advised the President's Cancer Panel under two presidents and the National Vaccine Advisory Committee. Dr. Brewer co-edited the FDA's book, *Communicating Risks and Benefits: An Evidence-Based User's Guide*.

# Disclosures/Conflicts of Interest

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National Cancer Institute

Pfizer Fdn

Robert Wood Johnson Fdn

State of North Carolina

World Health Organization

# Learning Objectives

1. Discuss how mental health problems affect seeking vaccination.
2. Identify actions from each of the domains of the Increasing Vaccination Model.
3. Identify which areas of intervention are most likely to lead to vaccination.

# References

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Vaccination is one of the great achievements of the 20th century, yet persistent public-health inadequate, delayed, and unstable vaccination uptake. Psychology offers three general proposals and intervening to increase uptake where vaccines are available and affordable. The first proposal is that *thoughts and feelings* can motivate getting vaccinated. Hundreds of studies have shown that risk beliefs about infectious disease correlate reliably with getting vaccinated; low confidence in vaccine efficacy about safety correlate reliably with not getting vaccinated. We were surprised to find that few studies have successfully changed what people think and feel about vaccines, and those few that succeeded in increasing uptake. The second proposition is that *social processes* can motivate getting vaccinated. Research has shown that social norms are associated with vaccination, but few interventions using normative messages increase vaccination uptake. Many experimental studies have relied on incentives to demonstrate that altruism and free riding (i.e., taking advantage of the protection provided by others) can change intended behavior, but few randomized trials have tested strategies to change social processes to increase uptake. The third proposition is that interventions can *facilitate vaccination directly* by changing what people think and feel. These interventions are by far the most plentiful and effective. To increase vaccine uptake, these interventions build on existing favorable intentions by facilitating them (through reminders, prompts, and primes) and reducing barriers (through logistics and healthy defaults): they shape behavior (through incentives, sanctions, and requirements). Although identification of thoughts and feelings to motivate vaccination is a work in progress, psychological principles can guide the design of systems and policies to directly facilitate action.

## Data for action: achieving high uptake of COVID-19 vaccines

INTERIM GUIDANCE  
3 FEBRUARY 2021

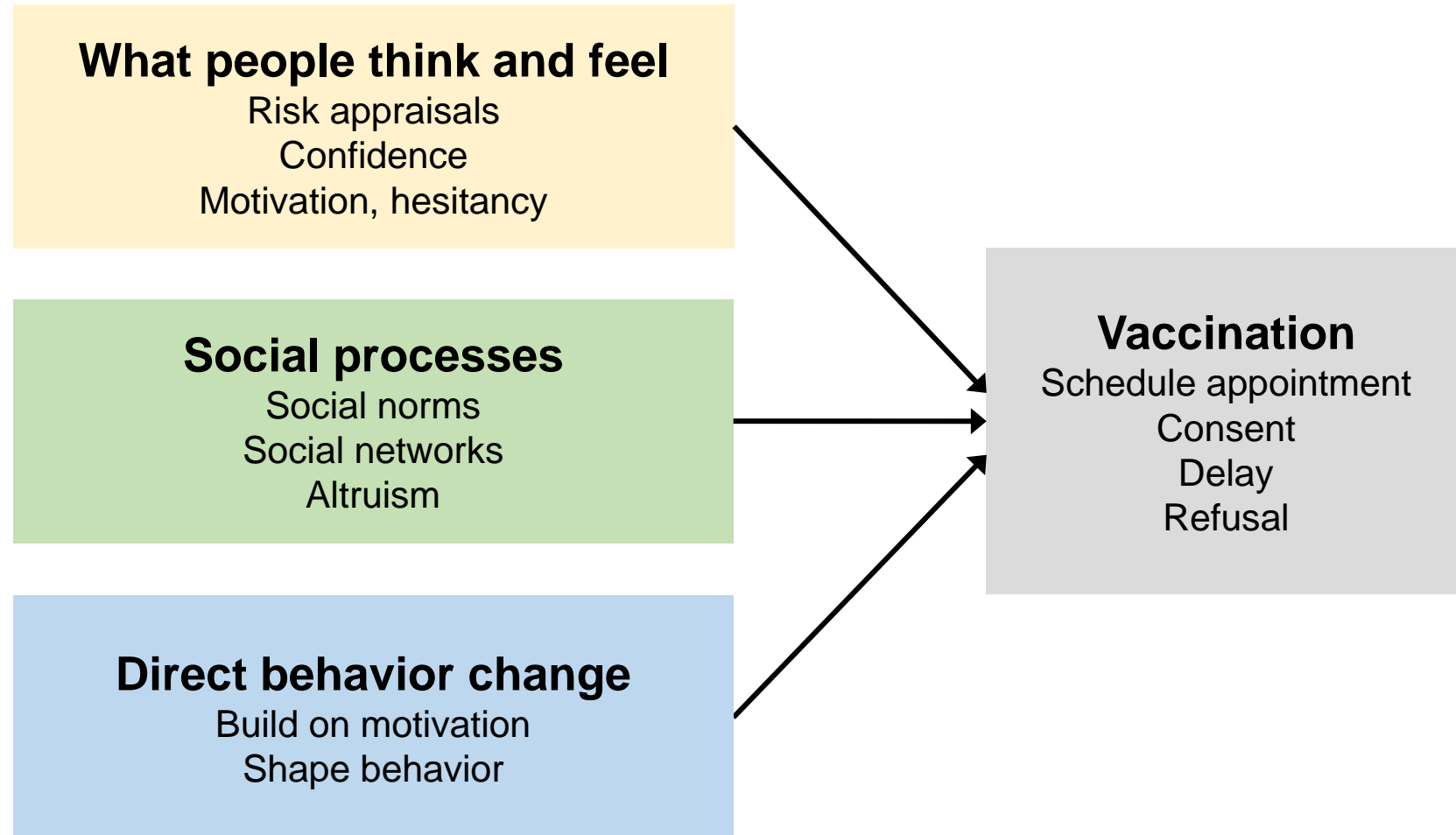


unicef   
for every child

### Vaccination uptake

- Schedule appointment
- Consent
- Delay
- Refusal

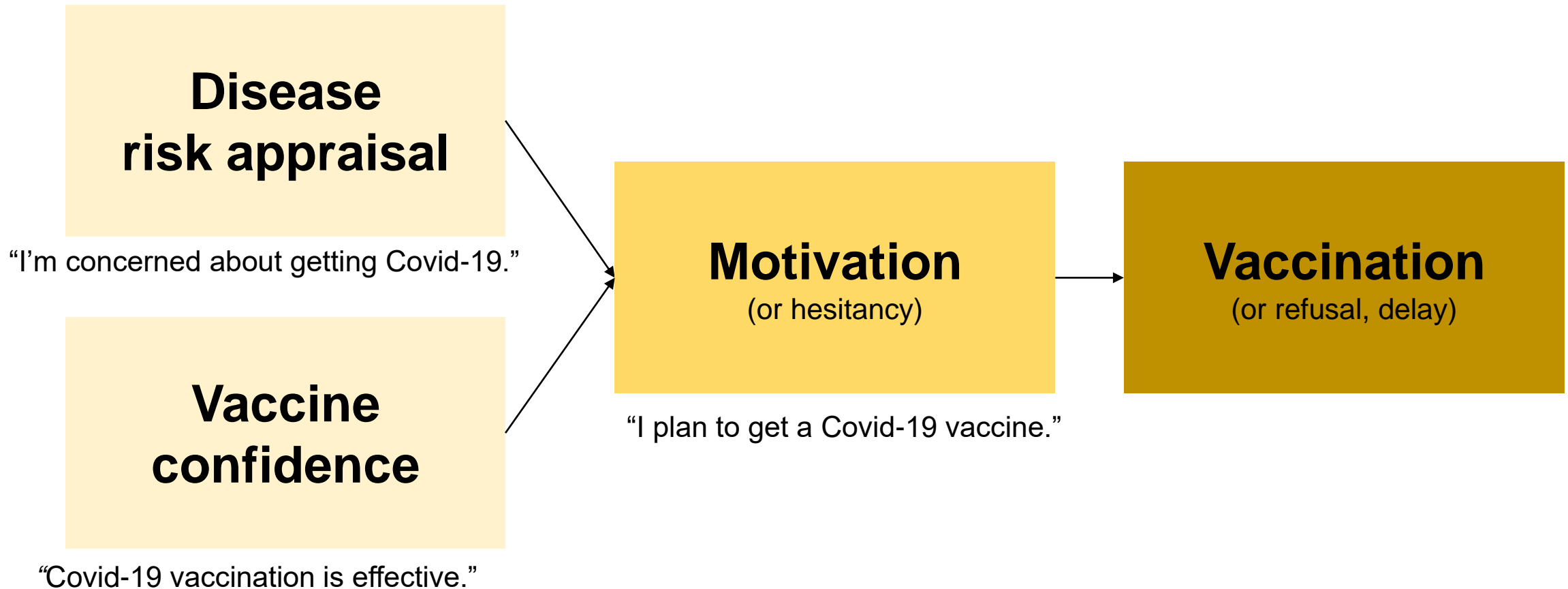
# Increasing Vaccination Model





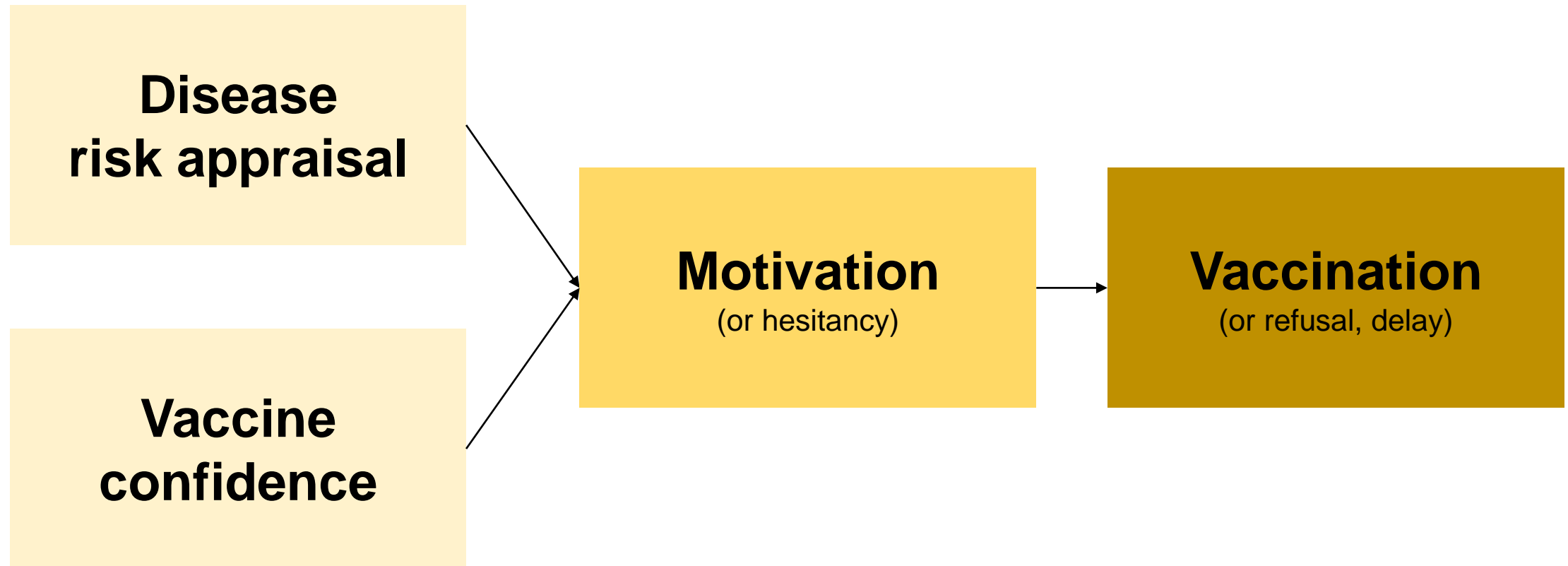
# What People Think and Feel

# Proposition 1. Thoughts and feelings influence vaccination



# Proposition 1. Thoughts and feelings influence vaccination

Strong support from correlational studies



# Evidence from randomized trials

## What people think and feel

## Likely impact

Messages to increase disease risk appraisals	<input type="radio"/>
Education campaigns to increase vax confidence	<input type="radio"/>
Decision aids	<input type="radio"/>
Motivational interviewing	<input type="radio"/>

- ☐ None or minimal
- ☒ Modest
- ☐ Substantial

# Leveraging Thoughts And Feelings

## Address cognitive distortions

- Identify and address internal conflicts
- Allay concerns about COVID-19 vaccination effectiveness and safety, the speed of vaccine development, and distrust of government

## Motivational interviewing

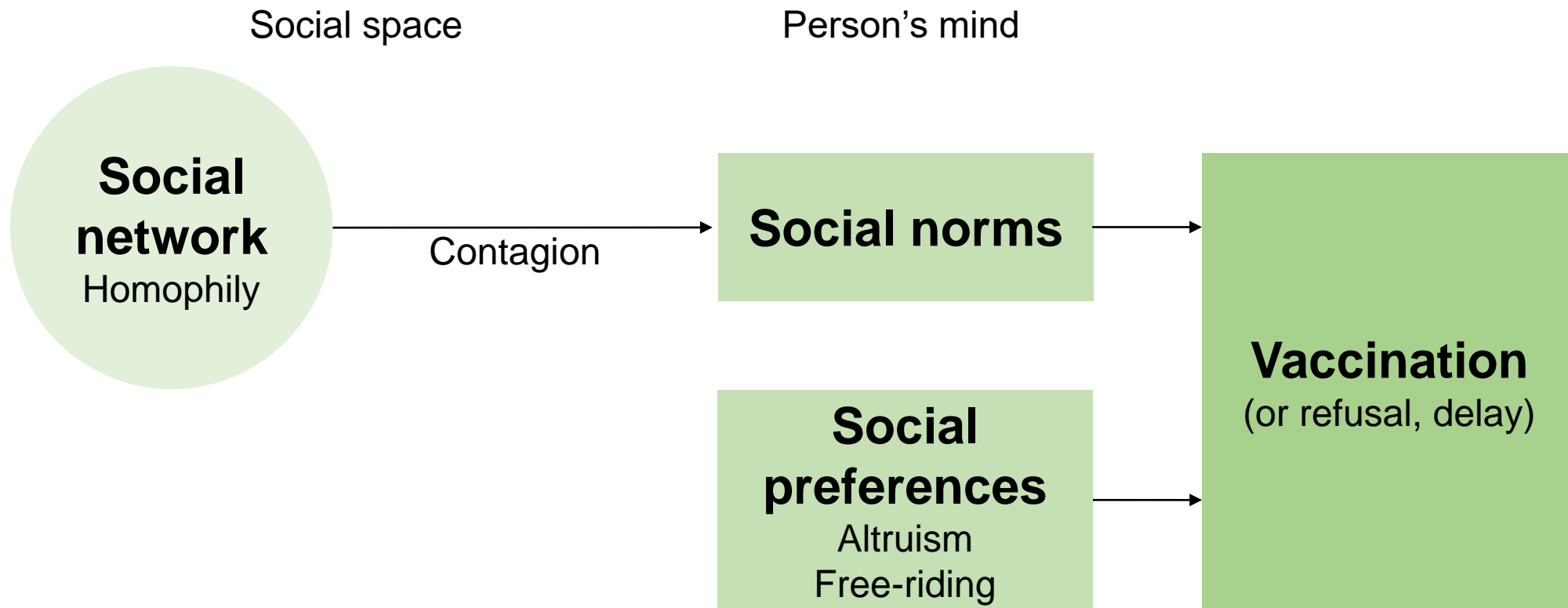
- Mental health professionals will recognize behavior change principles in MI
  - Express empathy
  - Develop discrepancy
  - Roll with resistance
  - Support self-efficacy
- Therapeutic sessions may offer more time to use MI than PCP visits

# Social Processes



# Proposition 2. Social processes influence vaccination

Strong support from correlational studies



# Evidence from randomized trials

## What people think and feel

Messages to increase disease risk appraisals	○
Education campaigns to increase vax confidence	○
Decision aids	○
Motivational interviewing	○

## Likely impact

- None or minimal
- Modest
- Substantial

## Social processes

Descriptive norm messages	●
Social network interventions that build on contagion	●
Messages that change altruism or freeriding beliefs	○

# Leveraging Social Processes

## Frank recommendation

- Interventions to improve the quality of primary care professional recommendations increase vaccine uptake
- The impact of recommendations from mental health professionals is very potentially promising
- Some patients could see a frank recommendation for vaccination as outside a mental health professional's role, and this interaction will vary depending on the duration and nature of the relationship

## Support managing relationships

- Counseling could also focus on helping people who want to be vaccinated but who worry that it may lead to ostracization by family and friends
- Therapists could help clients plan how to handle these conversations



1:28

+ PLAYLIST

DOWNLOAD

EMBED

TRANSCRIPT

YOUR HEALTH

# Advice For Doctors Talking To Parents About HPV Vaccine: Make It Brief

December 5, 2016 · 5:39 AM ET  
Heard on [Morning Edition](#)

PATTI NEIGHMOND



# Follow the Path to Increasing HPV Vaccination

Take these steps for effectively recommending HPV vaccination. They will save you time and improve patient satisfaction.

1

..... If a parent is hesitant .....

USE A

## PRESUMPTIVE ANNOUNCEMENT

A presumptive announcement assumes parents are ready to vaccinate. This is an effective way to recommend adolescent vaccines, including HPV vaccine.<sup>1</sup>

KEY ELEMENTS OF AN ANNOUNCEMENT:

Note child's age to cue that this is part of routine care

Say you will vaccinate today

Announce children this age are due for vaccines that prevent several diseases, placing HPV cancers in middle of list

2

..... If a parent declines .....

## ASK FOR THEIR MAIN CONCERN

AND ADDRESS IT

Connect with parents by showing you heard them. Counsel using a research-test message. Examples are available on the other side of this flyer or at [hpvIQ.org](http://hpvIQ.org)<sup>2</sup>

3

## TRY AGAIN ANOTHER DAY

Almost 70% of parents who initially declined later agree to HPV vaccine or plan to soon.<sup>3</sup>

# Effective Responses to HPV Vaccine Concerns

1,200 parents told us these were the best messages to use when addressing their concerns.<sup>2</sup>

### AGE

"Kids respond more strongly to HPV vaccine when they are younger. This may give better protection against some cancers."

### SEX

"This really isn't about sex. The HPV vaccine is about preventing cancer."

### SAFETY

"This vaccine is one of the most studied medications on the market. The HPV vaccine is safe, just like the other vaccines given at this age."

### EFFECTIVENESS

"Over 30,000 Americans get cancer from HPV every year. Most could be prevented with the HPV vaccine."

### GUIDELINES

"Experts at the CDC agree that kids should get the HPV vaccine by age 11 or 12 to prevent several cancers."

### REQUIREMENTS

"School requirements don't always keep up with medical science. The HPV vaccine is an important vaccine that can prevent many cancers."

### BOYS

"HPV infections don't care if you're a boy or girl. The virus can cause cancer and many other diseases."

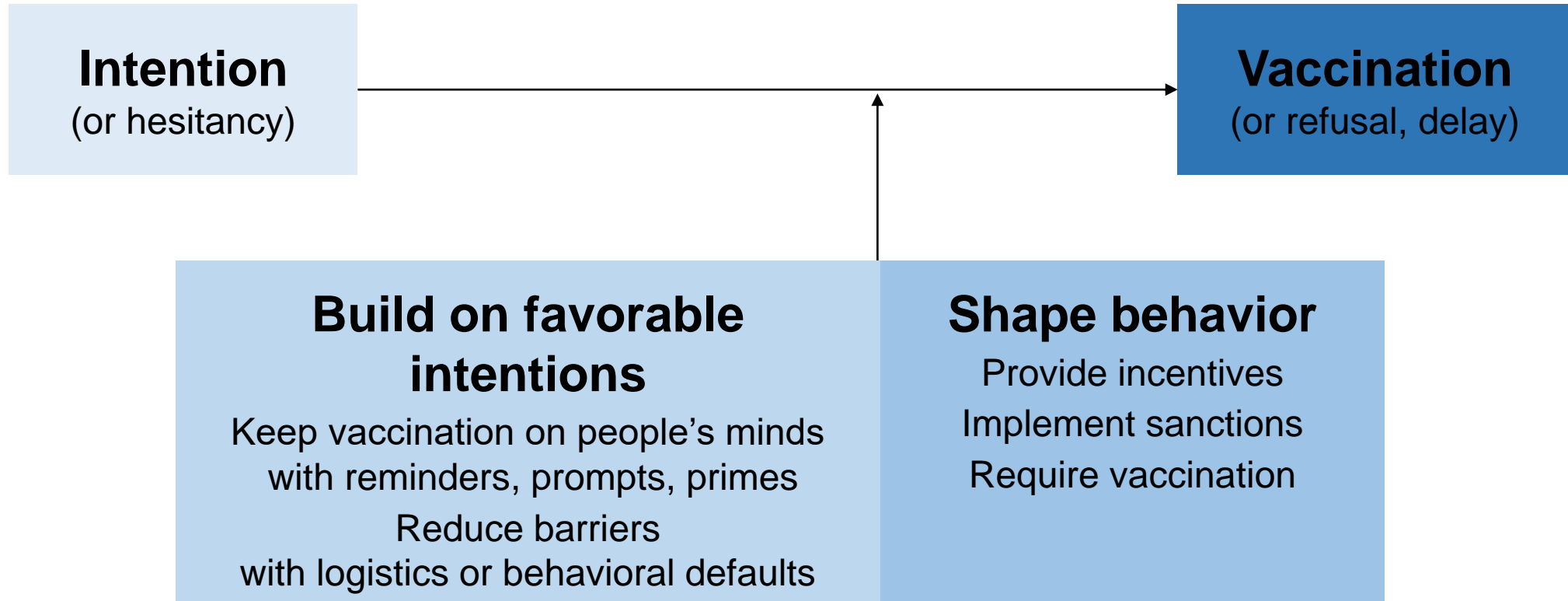


# Changing Behavior Directly



# Proposition 3. Direct behavior change influences vaccination

► Clear evidence from interventions



# Evidence from randomized trials

## What people think and feel

Messages to increase disease risk appraisals	○
Education campaigns to increase vax confidence	○
Decision aids	○
Motivational interviewing	○

- None or minimal  
 ● Modest  
 ● Substantial

## Social processes

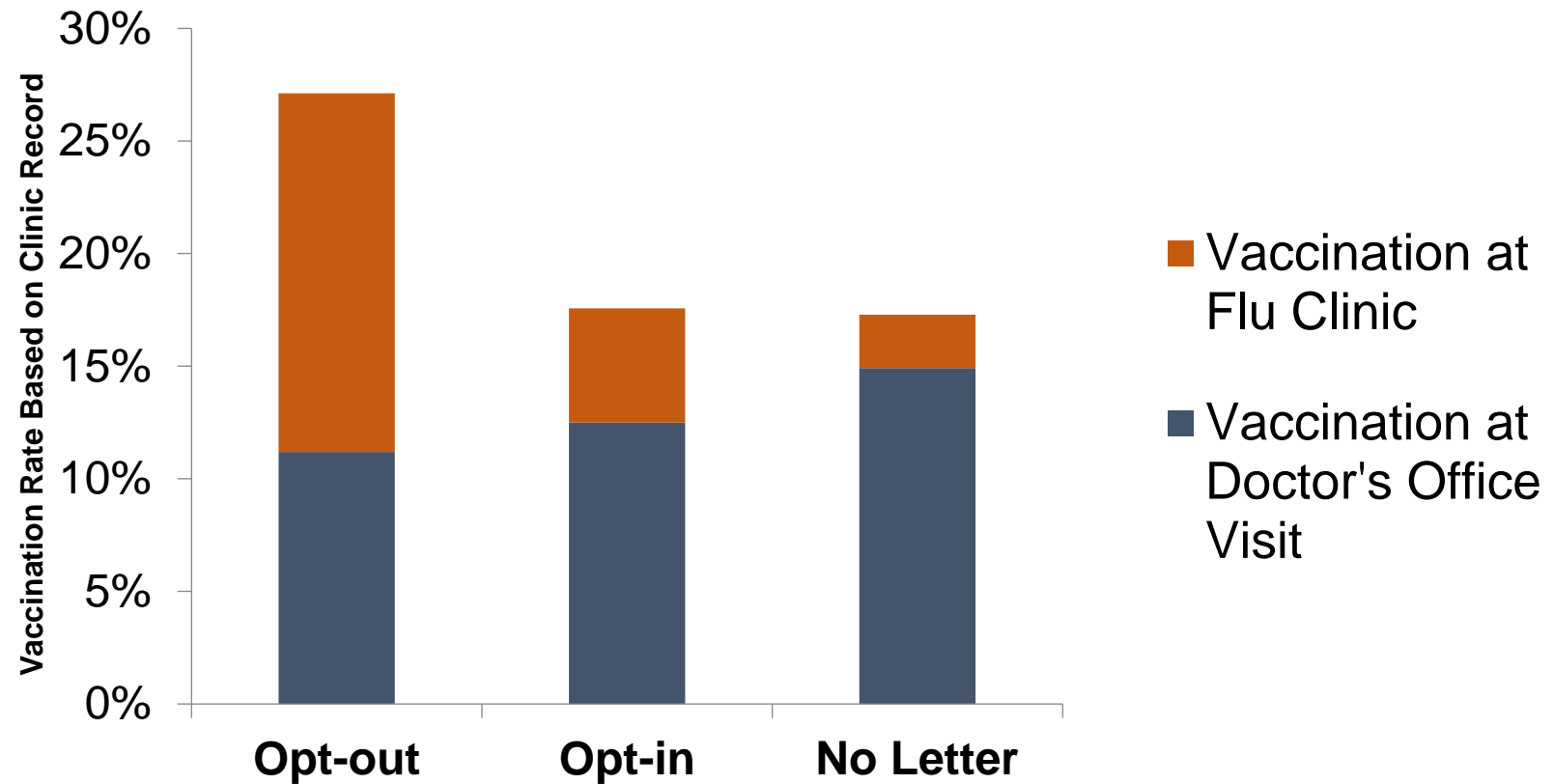
Descriptive norm messages	●
Social network interventions that build on contagion	●
Messages that change altruism or freeriding beliefs	○

## Direct behavior change

Presumptive healthcare provider recommendations	●
Reminders and recalls	●
Implementation intention interventions	●
Mere measurement interventions	●
Onsite vaccination	●
Default appointments	●
Incentives	●
Vaccination requirements	●

## Example

# Default appointments



# Leveraging Direct Behavior Change

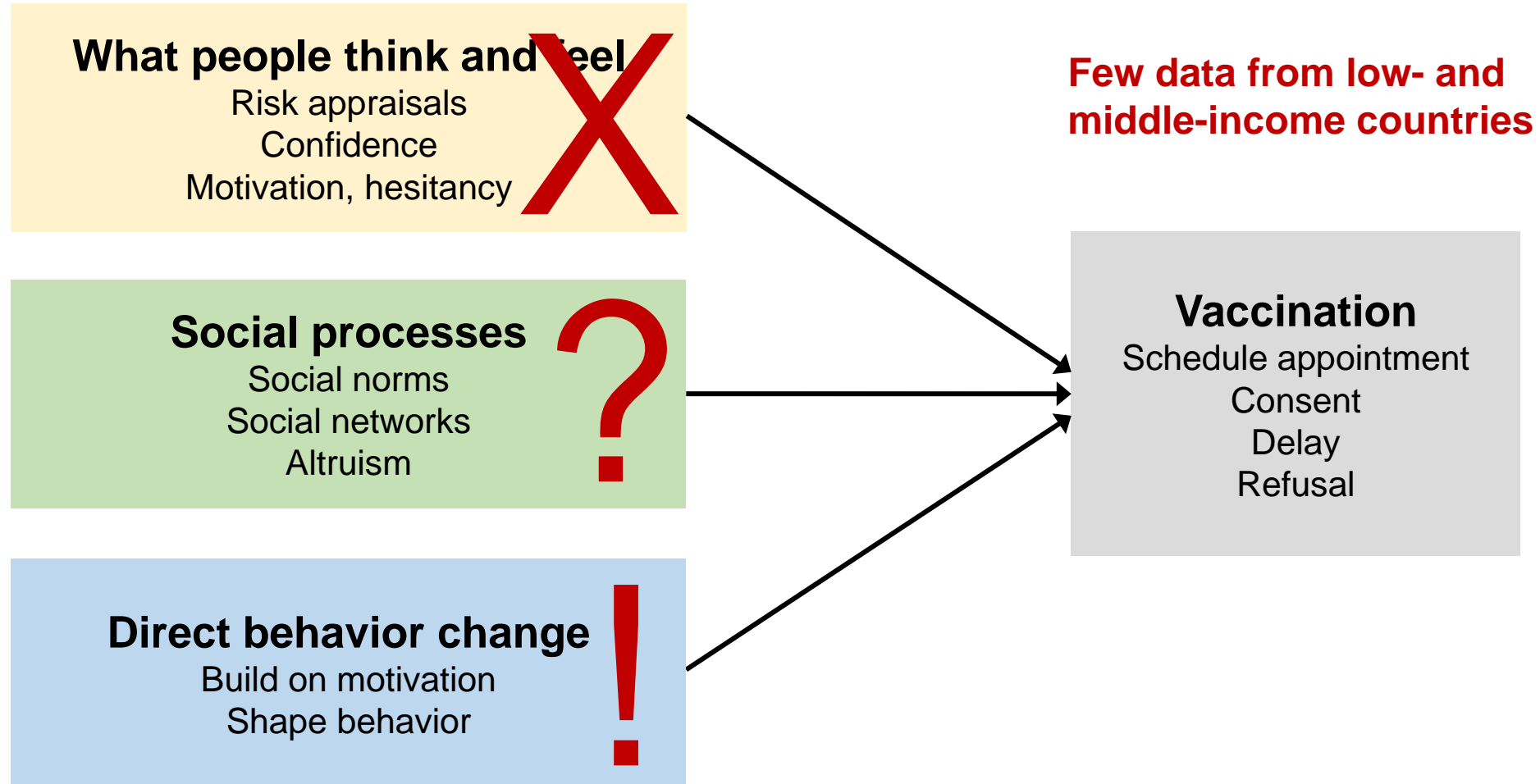
## Lowering barriers

- Focus on mechanics of identifying points of access and reducing barriers

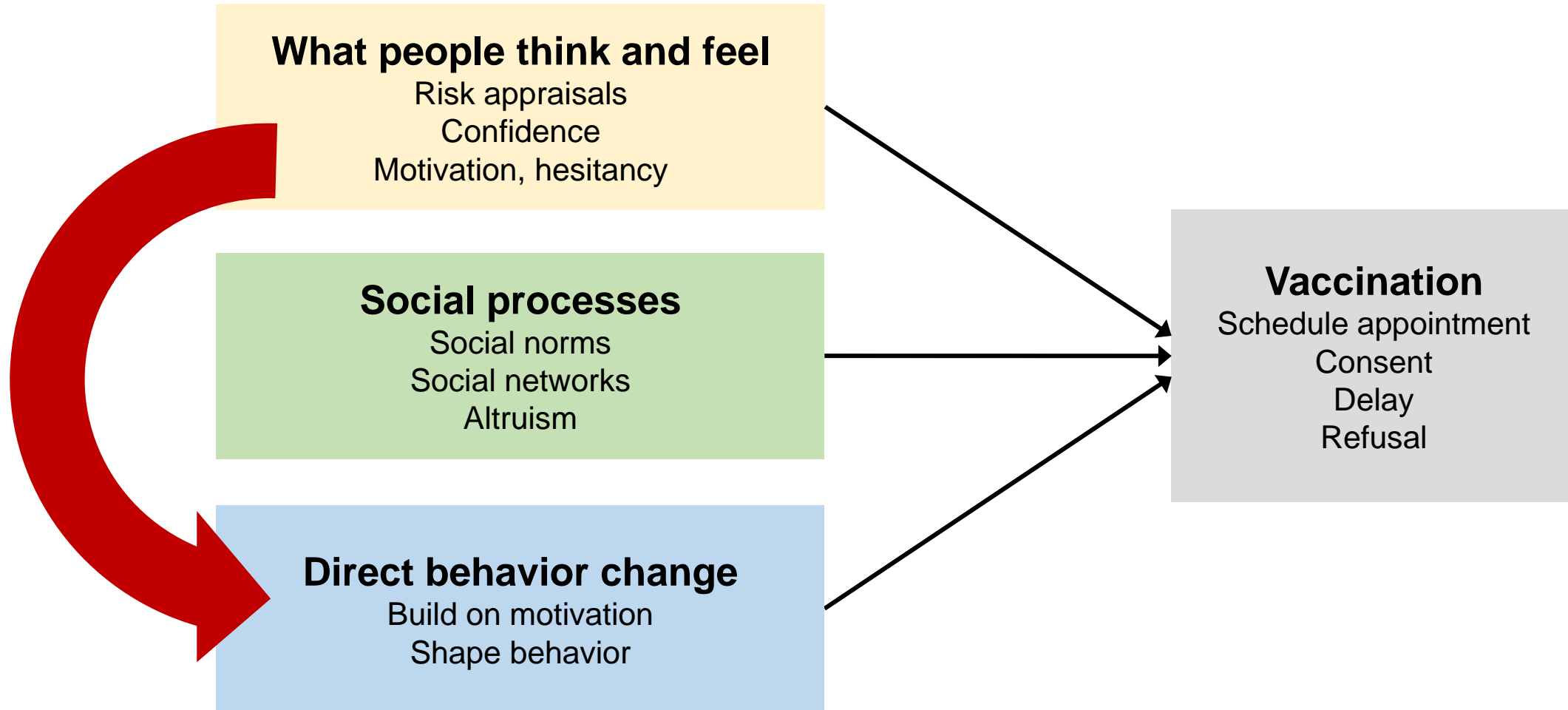
## Action planning

- Sit with clients as they book an appointment and help them to think through and plan for potential barriers they may face
- Remind clients of the opportunity to vaccinate and upcoming appointments

# Increasing Vaccination Model



# Increasing Vaccination Model







# Q&A With Dr. Brewer



- Dr. Sammons will read select questions that were submitted via the Q&A feature throughout the presentation.
- Due to time constraints, we will not be able to address every question asked.

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