

HARC’s Mechanisms of Action (MoA) Taxonomy includes 26 MoAs with definitions adapted from the [Human Behavior Change Project](#).¹ Further details on the methods for adapting this taxonomy are forthcoming.

HOW CAN THE MoA TAXONOMY BE USED?

Home visiting is not a blank slate. There are now 22 models designated as evidence-based and many emerging models. For this reason, it is important to consider MoAs not only in designing new interventions, but in creating a deeper understanding of the interventions that comprise existing models to learn ‘*what work best, for whom, in which contexts, why and how*’. There are many ways that researchers and evaluators, intervention developers, local programs and other partners in home visiting can use this taxonomy. Some examples include the following:

- To specify an existing model or program’s theorized pathway from intervention to selected behaviors to intended outcome;
- To assess the coherence of an existing model or program – the match between an intervention’s intended MoAs and the strengths and needs of the families who enroll;
- To test the effectiveness of existing home visiting interventions in influencing intended MoAs; and
- To specify and describe interventions in intervention manuals, theories of change, proposals, logic models, training materials, reports, and in peer-reviewed manuscripts using a common language.

MoA Label ¹	Definition ¹	Related Terms and Constructs ²
Needs	Deficit of something required for survival, well-being or personal fulfillment	Physiological; Safety; Belonging
Knowledge	An awareness or understanding of facts or concepts gained through experience or education	Procedural; Factual; Contextual
Skills	An ability or proficiency acquired through practice	Competence; Practice; Problem-solving skills
Behavioral Regulation	Behavioral, cognitive and/or emotional skills for managing or changing behavior	Breaking habit; Emotion regulation; Reflective capacities
Memory, Attention and Decision Processes	Ability to retain information, focus on aspects of the environment and choose between two or more alternatives	Attention control; Decision making; Cognitive overload/fatigue
Values	Moral or social principles accepted by an individual as a guide to what is good, desirable or important	Compassion; Honesty
Optimism	The belief that things will happen for the best or that desired goals will be attained	Pessimism; Unrealistic optimism
Emotion	A mental state or feeling arising in response to a stimulus that may involve physiological, cognitive, and/or behavioral elements	Fear; Anxiety; Stress; Joy; Depression; Satisfaction

MoA Label ¹	Definition ¹	Related Terms and Constructs ²
Self-image	An individual's conception and evaluation of themselves, including psychological and physical characteristics and qualities	Self-esteem
Perceived Susceptibility/ Vulnerability	An individual's perceptions of the likelihood that they are vulnerable to a threat	Perceived health risk, Perceived social risk; Physical and social consequences of threat (e.g. illness, rejection)
Motivation	Conscious or unconscious factors that give purpose or direction to behavior	Extrinsic (e.g. family); Intrinsic
Intention	A conscious decision or resolve to perform a behavior	Stages of change; Commitment; Dedication
Goals	Mental representations of outcomes or end states that an individual wants to achieve	<i>Goal/target setting; Action planning</i>
Internal Feedback Processes	An individual's thought processes through which current behavior is evaluated in relation to a particular standard	<i>Self-monitoring; Self-evaluation; Self-reflection</i>
Social Role and Identity	The behaviors and personal qualities that an individual exhibits in social settings (e.g., family, peers, work)	Social identity; Professional identity; Leadership
General Attitudes/Beliefs	An individual's general perceptions or conviction about an object, person, group, issue, or concept, ranging from negative to positive	Disinterested; Accepting; Biased; Impartial; Political, societal, philosophical, or spiritual beliefs
Attitude towards the Behavior	An individual's perceptions of a specific behavior, ranging from negative to positive	Disinterested; Accepting; Biased; Impartial; Political, societal, philosophical, or spiritual beliefs
Beliefs about Capabilities	An individual's beliefs about their ability to successfully perform a behavior	Self-efficacy; Self-confidence; Perceived competence; Agency (e.g., feeling of control over actions and consequences)
Beliefs about Consequences	An individual's belief about what will be achieved and/or lost by engaging in a behavior, including whether a behavior will lead to a specific outcome	Outcome expectancies; Anticipated regret; Perceived Consequents
Environment and Resources	Aspects of an individual's social or physical environment that facilitate or inhibit behavior	Environmental stressors; Social or material resources; Organizational culture/climate; Barriers and facilitators
Behavioral Cueing	Processes by which a specific behavior is prompted by the external environment, the performance of another behavior, or from thoughts	<i>Reminders; Prompts</i>
Reinforcement	Process by which the likelihood of a response is increased or decreased by being paired with a stimulus or circumstance	<i>Rewards</i> (tangible or words of affirmation); <i>Incentives; Punishment; Consequents</i>
Social Influences	Interpersonal processes that can cause an individual to change or maintain their thoughts, feelings, or behaviors	<i>Social support; Social pressure; Group conformity; Interpersonal conflict; Alienation</i>

MoA Label ¹	Definition ¹	Related Terms and Constructs ²
Social Learning/Imitation	Conscious or unconscious processes by which behaviors, attitudes, and motivational states observed in others are internalized and replicated	<i>Modeling</i>
Subjective Norms	An individual's perceptions of what most people within a social group or community believe or do	Perceived group norms; Perceived social norms
Norms	The actual attitudes and behaviors exhibited by most people within a social group or community	Group norms; Social norms; Culture

¹ MoA labels and definitions are adapted from the [Human Behaviour Change Project](https://www.humanbehaviourchange.org/); ² Related terms and constructs are provided to improve understanding of the definition and are not meant to be an exhaustive list. The terms and constructs listed represent related theoretical constructsⁱⁱ, common types of the MoA, and techniques (shown in *italics*) common in home visiting that are often associated with the MoA.

ⁱ <https://www.humanbehaviourchange.org/>

ⁱⁱ Cane, J., O'Connor, D. & Michie, S. (2012). Validation of the theoretical domains framework for use in behaviour change and implementation research. *Implementation Science*, 7, 37.

<https://implementationscience.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/1748-5908-7-37>